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THE USE OF YE IN THE FUNCTION OF THOU

IN MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM
MS. AUCHINLECK TO MS. VERNON

A Study of Grammar and Social Intercourse
in Fourteenth-Century England

BY

RUSSELL OSBORNE STIDSTON

Acting Instructor in English 1913-14

Revised for Publication by
ARTHUR G. KENNEDY
Instructor in English Philology

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY
1917

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(Continued on third page of cover.)

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Stidston, Russell Osborn 1913-14

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
PRESS

PREFACE

The study of the pronoun which follows was completed in a more extensive form by the late Dr. RUSSELL OSBORNE STIDSTON in the summer of 1914 and, like my own study of the pronoun for the thirteenth century, owed its inception largely to the interest felt in the subject by our former teacher and friend, the late Professor Ewald Flügel. And I am sure that I speak with a thoro knowledge of Dr. Stidston's feelings in the matter when I say that to Professor Flügel is due the credit not only for the undertaking of the work but also to a great extent for the painstaking research which Dr. Stidston has made of the extensive literature of the period and the carefulness and accuracy which I have found thruout the whole study. While it is to be regretted that the study could not be published in its original form, it has seemed best in view of present conditions of publishing to present the matter in slightly condensed form now rather than leave it to the uncertainties of the future.

I trust that aside from sacrificing a more deliberate and pleasing style of presentation for a necessarily condensed and abrupt one I have not omitted much of value. Many of the quotations have been replaced by mere citations, but wherever there is any question in the reader's mind it is still possible to look up the passage in the text. Dr. Stidston's conclusions and opinions I have tried to preserve intact. Not a little saving in space has been effected by a change in the general plan of presentation. The original general arrangement according to the sixteen MSS. has been changed to an arrangement according to the relations of the speakers, so that numerous introductory and concluding passages have been eliminated. Some interesting sidelights on the MSS. have been lost by this new arrangement, but at the same time attention has been focused somewhat more strongly upon the relations of the speakers and their use of the pronoun.

The material utilized for the study comprises practically all the contents of the most important MSS. copied between approximately 1325 and 1375. The most conspicuous exception is the Vernon text of *Piers Plowman*, which, for several reasons, it has seemed best to omit.

Of course some literature has been omitted which was undoubtedly written during this part of the fourteenth century, and, on the other hand, pieces have been included, such as those of the Auchinleck collection, which must have been composed quite a little earlier than the time of the writing of the MS. But since scribes were apt to take liberties

with the texts that they were copying, it is safer to run the risk of including pronouns inserted by fourteenth-century scribes in earlier texts rather than of getting later forms which have been engrafted on fourteenth-century texts.

It is hardly necessary to suggest that the material with which we work is not to be taken too seriously as one can never be absolutely sure that the author—or the scribe—is making his characters speak in a manner that is true to life. If in the succeeding pages the speeches are studied as tho they proceeded from living people the excuse must be that literary artists, or even near-artists, make their characters speak the language with which they themselves are familiar. Consequently, just because the persons that we shall meet, Saracens, giants, angels, etc., are more or less stereotyped, they are more likely to employ the speech-forms of fourteenth-century England. The conclusions that we shall reach later on with regard to the liberties taken by an English translator of French literature will strengthen this belief in the likelihood of the author's reproducing contemporary conditions. But after all, the fact that we are studying art and not real life, and at that an art which has passed thru unknown vicissitudes of scribal manipulation, must not be lost sight of altogether.

If the conclusions arrived at seem to some rather vague and unsatisfactory I can only say that a careful examination of the material in hand has led me to agree thoroly with Dr. Stidston that there is not much warrant for anything more than very general conclusions regarding the use of the plural pronoun in the function of singular during the greater part of the fourteenth century. Nor is it to be wondered at that after two centuries the usage was not entirely fixed, for it is not just a question of instituting a new linguistic custom or practice, but the introduction of this phase of formal address into England brings with it an entirely new attitude toward social intercourse and the relations of the various strata of society. For the Anglo-Saxon bluntness and sincerity of speech it would substitute a new French culture characterized by greater polish and an artificiality which covers in many instances, we must admit, a very great lack of sincerity.

In concluding I can only express the hope that in preparing this study of Dr. Stidston's for publication I may not have impaired in any way the usefulness and scholarliness of the work as its author left it, for it represents not only the last work of one who had given promise of a career filled with scholarly attainment but it is also the last piece of research to be completed for and accepted by the late head of the department of English philology at Stanford, Dr. Ewald Flügel.

ARTHUR G. KENNEDY,
Instructor in English Philology.

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A. GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- BAHRS: Über den Gebrauch der Anrede-Pronomina im Altenglischen. Realschule I. Ordn. zu Vegesack. Jahresbericht über das elfte Schuljahr 1879-1880, pp. 1-26.
- BERNHARDT, E.: Über *du* und *ir* bei Wolfram, Hartmann und Gottfried, und über *tu* und *vous* in den entsprechenden altfranzösischen Gedichten. Zeit. für deut. Phil. XXXIII, 368-390. 1901.
- CARRUTH, W. H.: Pronouns of Address in "The Idylls of the King." Kansas Univ. Quart. VI, 159-170. 1897.
- CHATELAIN, EMILE: Du Pluriel de Respect en Latin. Revue de Philologie IV, 129-139. 1880.
- ECKSTEIN, FR.: Zur Geschichte der Anrede im Deutschen durch die Fürwörter. Leipzig, 1869.
- EHRISMANN, GUSTAV: Duzen und Ihrzen im Mittelalter. Zeit. für deut. Wortforschung I, 117-149. 1900.
- FREEMAN, BLANCHE: Forms of Address and Ejaculatory Expressions in the Towneley Plays. Stanford Univ. A. M. Thesis. 1911. Unpublished.
- GANTER, AUGUST: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Anrede im Altfranzösischen (1250-1350). Heidelberg diss. 1905.
- GUMMERE, F. B.: The English Dative-Nominative of the Personal Pronoun. Amer. Jour. of Phil. IV, 283-290. 1883.
- HARRIS, MYRTLE: Use of Thou and You in Hamlet, Henry IV and The Tempest. Stanford Univ. A. M. Thesis. 1909. Unpublished.
- JESPERSEN, OTTO: Progress in Language. New York, 1894.
- JOHNSTON, O. M.: The Use of Ella, Lei and La as Polite Forms of Address in Italian. Mod. Phil. I, 469-475. 1904.
- KENNEDY, ARTHUR G.: The Pronoun of Address in English Literature of the Thirteenth Century. Leland Stanford Jr. Univ. Publications. Univ. Series. 1915.
- LOUNSBURY, T. R.: Pronouns of Address. Harper's Mag., Jan. 1913, pp. 200-206.
- MAHR, AUGUST: Formen und Formeln der Begrüssung in England von der normanischen Eroberung bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts. Heidelberg diss. 1911.
- MUSSAFIA, A.: Die Anrede im Rolandsliede. Gröbers Zeit. für Rom. Phil. IV, 109-113. 1879.
- PFEFFER, F.: Die Anredepronomen bei Shakespeare. Halle diss. 1877.

- RUBIN, DAVID: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Anrede im Altfranzösischen gegen Ausgang des Mittelalters (ca. 1350-1500). Heidelberg diss. 1910.
- SASSE, J.: De Numero Plurali Qui Vocatur Majestatis. Leipzig, 1889.
- SCHLIEBITZ, VICTOR: Die Person der Anrede in der französischen Sprache. Breslau diss. 1886.
- SPIES, HEINRICH: Studien zur Geschichte des englischen Pronomens im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. Morsbachs Studien zur Engl. Phil. I. Halle, 1897.
- STOWELL, W. A.: Old French Titles in Direct Address. Johns Hopkins diss. 1908.
- STRATMANN-BRADLEY: A Middle English Dictionary. Oxford, 1891.

Also a few comments on the subject by editors of Middle English texts. First in importance is Skeat's summary in the introduction to *William of Palerne*. Skeat also has a brief note to line 73 of *Joseph of Arimathie*. The summary is mentioned by Cowper on page xi of the introduction of *Meditacyuns*, with two rather poorly selected illustrations. Herrtage, in his introduction to *Sir Ferumbras* (xxii), remarks upon the regular observance of the distinction between singular and plural, noting but one exception. In the notes to *Guy* (xvth century version) Zupitza comments on line 356 to the effect that the rules observed in *Palerne* are often neglected in this work. See also a list of examples of nominative *you* in Zupitza's note to line 4192 of *Guy*. Here also may be mentioned a reference to the subject in A. Gough's dissertation on *Emare*, page 30.

In reconsidering questions of dialect, date, etc., I have also utilized Wells's *Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, which has been published since Dr. Stidston completed his work (A.G.K.).

B. TEXTS USED.

I. MS. AUCHINLECK OF THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY, EDINBURGH.¹

1. Legend of Pope Gregory ed. F. Schulz, Königsburg diss. 1876.
2. The King of Tars ed. Krause, Engl. Stud. 11:1-62. Midland dialect, c. 1300.²
3. Canticum de Creatione (Adam and Eve) ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1878, pp. 139-147. Midland dialect, c. 1300.
4. Seynt Mergrete ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1881, pp. 225-235.
5. Seynt Katerine ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1881, pp. 242-258.³
6. Owain Miles ed. Kölbing, Engl. Stud. 1:57-121.
7. þe desputisoun bitven þe bodi & þe soule ed. O. Kunze, Berlin diss. 1892. Mixed dialect, bef. 1300.
8. Harrowing of Hell ed. Hulme, E. E. T. S. Vol. C. E. Midland dialect, c. 1250.
9. A Miracle of the Virgin ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1881, pp. 499-502.
10. Epistola Alcuini ed. E. E. T. S. Vol. LXXV. E. Midland dialect, c. 1300.
11. Amis and Amiloun ed. Weber, Metrical Romances 2:367-493. 1810. Midland dialect, c. 1300.
12. Magdalena ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1878, pp. 163-170.⁴
13. Anna, our leuedis moder. . . . Not available.
14. On þe seuen dedly sinnes ed. Kölbing, Engl. Stud. 9:43.
15. þe pater noster ed. Kölbing, Engl. Stud. 9:47.
16. Assumptio Mariae ed. Schwarz, Engl. Stud. 8:427-464. Midland dialect.
17. Sir Degarre. . . . Not available.

¹ The hand is Northern and the generally accepted date c. 1325. The arrangement and numbering of the pieces are taken from Kölbing's *Vier Romanzen-Handschriften*, Engl. Stud. 7:177-201, which may be consulted for more detailed information. The names of the pieces are, for the most part, those used in the editions cited.

² A text from the Vernon MS., printed parallel with this, has also been utilized here.

³ Horstmann also prints a text of Caius College MS. 175, which text will not be noticed in the later study of that MS.

⁴ Title as used by Scott and Laing, also mentioned by Kölbing.

18. The Seuyn Sages ed. Weber, *Metr. Rom.* 3:1-153.⁵ Kentish dialect, c. 1300-1330.
19. Floris and Blanchefleur ed. Hausknecht, 1885.
20. Edward II. (A satirical poem) ed. T. Wright, *Political Songs*, Camden Soc. Publ. 6:253-258.
21. A list of names of Norman barons. . . . Not available.
22. Guy of Warwick ed. Zupitza, *E. E. T. S. Vols.* XLII, XLIX, LIX. Midland dialect, c. 1300.
23. Continuation of 22 in different meter ed. as above.
24. Rembrun ed. Zupitza, *E. E. T. S.* XLII etc.
25. Sir Bevis of Hamtoun ed. Kölbing, *E. E. T. S. Vols.* XLVI, XLVIII, LXV.⁶ Southern dialect, c. 1300.
26. Arthour and Merlin ed. Kölbing, *Altengl. Bibliothek* Vol. 4, 1890. Dialect of neighborhood of Kent, prob. before 1300.
27. þe wench þat (lov) ed (a k)ing. A mutilated fragment ed. Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 7:187.
28. A peniworþ of witte' ed. Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 7:111-117.
29. Hou our leuedi saute was ferst founde ed. Horstmann, *Altengl. Leg.* 1881, pp. 220-224.
30. Lai le Frain ed. Weber, *Metr. Rom.* 1:357-371; also ed. Varnhagen, *Anglia* 3:415-423.
31. Rouland and Vernagu ed. Herrtage, *E. E. T. S. Vol.* XXXIX. E. Midland dialect with Southern features, c. 1300-1325.
32. Otuel ed. Herrtage, *E. E. T. S. Vol.* XXXIX. Dialect and date as above.
33. King Alisaunder. Fragment of 200 lines which will be taken up in connection with the Lincoln's Inn MS. 150 q. v.
34. þe þrostelcok and þe niȝtingale ed. Varnhagen, *Anglia* 4:207-210. c. 1275-90.
35. Les diz de Seint Bernard ed. Varnhagen, *Anglia* 3:291-2. c. 1275-90.
36. Psalm L (Dauid þe king) ed. Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 9:49-50.
37. Sir Tristrem ed. Kölbing, Heilbronn, 1878-82. Northern dialect, c. 1290-1300.
38. Sir Orpheo ed. Zielke, Breslau, 1880.
39. A moral poem ed. Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 9:440-3.
40. Chronicle of England ed. Ritson, *Metr. Rom.* 2:270.⁷
41. Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild ed. J. Caro, *Engl. Stud.* 12:323-366. N. Midland dialect, c. 1300-1325.

⁵ Since gaps in MS. Auchinleck force the ed. to utilize MS. Cott. Galba E IX of the xvth cent., ll. 1-134 and 2871-4002 have not been used. The collation by Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 6:443-449, has been utilized.

⁶ The version found in Caius Coll. MS. 107, also printed by Zupitza, is occasionally referred to, altho it is of the next century.

⁷ While Ritson uses MS. Royal 12 C xii he professes to give the variants of our MS.

42. Praise of Women ed. Kölbing, Engl. Stud. 7: 101-110.
43. King Richard ed. Kölbing, Engl. Stud. 8: 115-119. (Two fragments of 176 lines each).
44. *De simonie* ed. T. Wright, Political Songs, pp. 323-345.

II. MS. OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.⁸

45. English Metrical Homilies ed. John Small, Edinburgh, 1862.
46. *Miraculum de Conceptione Beatae Mariae* ed. Small in the introduction to the above ed. of homilies.

III. MS. ARUNDEL 57.⁹

47. The Ayenbite of Inwyt ed. Morris, E. E. T. S. Vol. 23. Kentish dialect, 1340.

IV. ADDITIONAL MS. 17,376.¹⁰

48. Prose Psalter, etc. ed. Bülbring, E. E. T. S. Vol. 97. West-Midland dialect.
49. Poems of William of Shoreham ed. Konrath, E. E. T. S. Vol. LXXXVI. Kentish dialect, c. 1320.

V. LINCOLN'S INN MS. 150.¹¹

50. Kyng Alisaunder ed. Weber, Metr. Rom. 1: 1-327.¹²

VI. MS. OF THE INNER TEMPLE LIBRARY, PETYT MSS. No. 511 No. 7.¹³

51. Robert of Brunne's translation of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle ed. Hearne, 1810.¹⁴ Lincolnshire dialect, 1338.

VII. MS. 131 OF THE LAMBETH LIBRARY.¹⁵

52. The Story of England by Robert of Brunne ed. Furnivall, Rolls Series 1887. Lincolnshire dialect, 1338.

⁸ Written in a Northern hand of the early part of the xivth century.

⁹ An autograph of Dan Michel, dated 1340.

¹⁰ Written, acc. to Madden and Furnivall, 1300-1350; acc. to Konrath and Varnhagen, fifty years later.

¹¹ Written at end of xivth or beginning of xvth cent. acc. to Wells, *Manual*, p. 100 (A. G. K.).

¹² MS. Laud I 74 (xivth cent.) supplies lines 4772-5989 and a few other lines which do not affect the problem of direct address. Weber says that the 200 lines of conclusion found in MS. Auchinleck agree very closely with the readings of the other MSS.

¹³ Written bef. 1400 acc. to Wells, *Manual*, p. 200 (A. G. K.).

¹⁴ Complete footnotes give the readings of Langtoft's Chronicle in Wright's ed. for the Rolls Series.

¹⁵ Written about the middle of the xivth cent.

VIII. MS. 13 OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

53. William of Palerne ed. Skeat, E. E. T. S. Vol. I. West-Midland dialect, c. 1350.

IX. CAIUS COLLEGE MS. 175.¹⁶

54. Richard Cœur de Lion ed. Weber, Metr. Rom. 2:1-278.
 55. Sir Ysumbras ed. Schleich, Palæstra Vol. 1. E. Midland dialect.
 56. Athelston ed. Zupitza, Engl. Stud. 13:331-414; 14:321-344.

X. MS. HARLEY 3954.

57. Infancia Saluatoris ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1878, pp. 101-123.

XI. MS. REGIUS 17 B XVII.¹⁷

58. Lay-Folk's Mass-Book ed. Horstmann, Yorkshire Writers 2:1-8.
 59. Swete Ihesu. Ibid. 2:9-24.
 60. Speculum Mundi. A sermon of Alquin to Guy of Warwik. Ibid. 2:24-36.
 61. To live well. Ibid. 2:36-45.
 62. Twelve profits of Tribulation. Ibid. 2:45-60.
 63. Of the double comminge of Christe. Ibid. 2:60-62.
 64. Miscellanies. Ibid. 2:62-71.

XII. MS. CAMBR. DD V 64.¹⁸

65. Richard Rolle's Epistles ed. Horstmann, Yorksh. Writers 1:3-82. The pieces are: þe forme of liuyng. Ego dormio. þe commawndement. Poems (numbered 1-14). A grete clerk.

XIII. MS. HARLEY 1701.¹⁹

66. Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne ed. Furnivall, E. E. T. S. Vols. 119, 123. Lincolnshire dialect, begun in 1303.²⁰
 67. Robert of Brunne's Medytacyuns of þe soper of oure lorde ed. Cowper, E. E. T. S. 60. Date: c. 1315-30.

¹⁶ Written about 1350-1400 acc. to Zupitza, Engl. Stud. 14:321 ff. The other pieces of this MS. are treated under Nos. 5, 25, 90.

¹⁷ Written about 1370 in a mixed dialect.

¹⁸ Merely dated as 'of the xivth century' by Horstmann. The date seems to the writer to be approximately that of the preceding MS.

¹⁹ Written toward the end of the century acc. to Ward, *Cat. Rom.* 3:303.

²⁰ The *Manuel des Pechiez* by William of Waddington, given in parallel by Furnivall, has been referred to continually.

XIV. MS. ASHMOLE 33.²¹

68. Sir Ferumbras ed. Herrtage, E. E. T. S. Vol. XXXIV. Dialect of Devonshire, with many Northern forms.²²

XV. MS. COTTON NERO A X.²³

69. Sir Gawayn and the Grene Knyȝt ed. Morris, E. E. T. S. Vol. 4.
 70. The Perle ed. Morris, E. E. T. S. Vol. 1.
 71. Pacience. Ibid.
 72. Clannesse. Ibid.

XVI. VERNON MS.²⁴*A. Lyrical Verse.*

73. The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS. Vol. I ed. Horstmann, E. E. T. S. Vol. 98; Vol. II ed. Furnivall, E. E. T. S. Vol. 117. (The poems of this collection are numbered from 1 to 55, some of them again being divided into severally numbered parts. Indeed No. 55 really consists of 30 poems, mostly with refrains. They range from fol. 103 to the end of the MS., fol. 412.)

B. Legends and Homilies.

74. Hou þe Holy Cros was Y-founde ed. Morris, E. E. T. S. Vol. 46, pp. 19-61. (Fol. 28).
 75. Alexius ed. Horstmann, Archiv 56:393 ff. (Fol. 43).
 76. Gregorius ed. Horstmann, Archiv 55:407 ff. (Fol. 44).
 77. Fragments of a metrical translation of *Legenda Aurea* ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1878, pp. 1-97. (Fol. 89-99).
 78. Barlaam and Josaphat ed. Horstmann, Altengl. Leg. 1875, pp. 215-225. (Fol. 100).

²¹ Written about 1380.

²² The French *Fierabras* (ed. Les Anciens Poètes Vol. 4) has been referred to constantly.

²³ Written toward the end of the xivth cent. acc. to Ward, *Cat. Rom.* 3:303.

²⁴ Written by a Southern hand, c. 1375-1380, many Northern pieces being changed to the Southern dialect. It would be quite impossible to arrange all the pieces of this MS. of 412 folios in their actual order, as was done in the case of the Auchinleck MS. Some patience has supplied many folio references carelessly neglected in the editions, but there are still several for the *Minor Poems* which cannot be determined. (With the help of material that I have acquired since Dr. Stidston wrote the above I have succeeded in making for myself a fairly accurate and complete table of contents of this MS.—apparently no one has taken the trouble to publish such a table and we have not had access to the MS. itself, unfortunately—and my rechecking has merely served to emphasize the fact that much of the matter contained in the MS. has never been given to the public. A.G.K.)

79. Euphrosyne ed. Horstmann, *Altengl. Leg.* 1878, pp. 174-182. (Fol. 103).
80. Homilies (Narrative portions only) ed. Horstmann, *Archiv* 57:241-316. (A selection of 45 tales attached to various homilies found on fol. 126 and 165-214).
81. Theophilus ed. Kölbing, *Engl. Stud.* 1:16-57. (Fol. 203b).
82. *Proprium Sanctorum* ed. Horstmann, *Archiv.* 81:83-114; 299-321. (Numbered from 1 to 26. Fol. 215-227).
83. Ipotis ed. Horstmann, *Altengl. Leg.* 1881, pp. 341-348. (Fol. 296).
84. Roberd of Cisyle ed. Horstmann, *Altengl. Leg.* 1878, pp. 209-219. (Fol. 299).

C. Miscellaneous pieces in the latter part of the MS.

85. Pieces of the Yorkshire Writers ed. Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers Vols. I and II* as follows: Points pleasing to God 1:110-111 (fol. no. lacking), *Speculum S. Edmundi* 1:240-261 (fol. 355), Epistle on mixed life 1:264-292 (fol. 353), *Forma confitendi* 2:340-345 (fol. 366), A talkyng of þe loue of God 2:345-366 (fol. 367).
86. A Disputacion bytwene the Bodi and the Soule ed. Wright, *Walter Mapes*, *Publ. Camden Soc. Vol. 16*, pp. 340-346. (Fol. 285).
87. The king of Tars ed. Krause, *Engl. Stud.* 11:1-62. (Fol. 304).
88. The Stacions of Rome ed. Furnivall, *E. E. T. S.* 25. (Fol. 314).
89. Swete Susan ed. *Amours*, *Scott. Text Soc.* 27 and 39, pp. 172-187. (Fol. 317).²⁵
90. *Spiritus Guydonis* ed. Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers* 2:292-333. (Fol. 363).
91. *Creatio Mundi* ed. Horstmann, *Altengl. Leg.* 1878, pp. 220-227. (Fol. 393).
92. Joseph of Arimathie ed. Skeat, *E. E. T. S. Vol. 44.* (Fol. 403). *W. Midland dialect*, c. 1350.

²⁵ While this piece occurs in *Minor Poems* as No. 53, *Amours'* ed. has been preferred because it gives four other versions along with the Vernon.

C. ABBREVIATIONS.

	NO.
Alexius	Alexius 75
Alquin	Speculum Mundi. A Sermon of Alquin etc.. 60
Amis	Amis and Amiloun. 11
Arthour	Arthour and Merlin. 26
Assumptio	Assumptio Mariae 16
Athelston	Athelston 56
Ayenbite	The Ayenbite of Inwyt. 47
Barlaam	Barlaam and Josaphat. 78
Bernard	Les diz de Seint Bernard. 35
Bevis	Sir Bevis of Hamtoun. 25
Bodi & Soule (Auch).	Þe desputisoun bitven þe bodi & þe soule. . . 7
Body & Soul (Vernon).	Disputacion bytwene the Bodi and the Soule 86
Chron. of England.	Chronicle of England. 40
Chron. of R. of Brunne.	Robert of Brunne's translation of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle. 51
Clannesse	Clannesse 72
Creatio	Creatio Mundi 91
Cros	Hou þe Holy Cros was Y-founde. 74
De Creat.	Canticum de Creatione. 3
Dormio	Ego dormio, in R. Rolle's Epistles. 65
Double Comminge.	Of the double Comminge of Christe. 63
Edward II.	Edward II 20
Epist. Alcuini.	Epistola Alcuini 10
Euphros	Euphrosyne 79
Ferumbras	Sir Ferumbras 68
Floris	Floris and Blauncheflur. 19
Forma	Forma Confitendi, in Pieces of Yorkshire Writers 85
Gawayn	Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyzt. 69
Gregorius.	Gregorius 76
Guy	Guy of Warwick. 22
Harrowing	Harrowing of Hell. 8
Homilies	English Metrical Homilies. 45
Horn C.	Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild. 41
H. Synne.	Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne. 66
Infancia	Infancia Saluatoris 57
Ipotis.	Ipotis 83
Joseph	Joseph of Arimathie. 92
Katerine	Seynt Katerine 5
Kyng Alisaunder.	Kyng Alisaunder 50
Lai	Lai le Frain. 30

	NO.
Leg. Aurea (1-7).....	Fragments of a metrical translation of Legenda Aurea 77
Live Well.....	To live well..... 61
Living	Þe forme of liuyng, in R. Rolle's Epistles... 65
Love	Þe commawndement of loue, in R. Rolle's Epistles 65
Magdalena	Magdalena 12
Massbook	Lay-Folk's Mass-Book 58
Medytacyuns	R. of Brunne's Medytacyuns of þe soper of oure lord 67
Mergrete	Seynt Mergrete 4
Miracle	A Miracle of the Virgin..... 9
Miraculum	Miraculum de Conceptione Beatae Mariae.. 46
Niȝtingale	Þe þrostelcok and þe niȝtingale..... 34
Orpheo	Sir Orpheo 38
Otuel	Otuel 32
Owain	Owain Miles 6
Pacience	Pacience 71
Palerne	William of Palerne..... 53
Pater Noster	Þe pater noster..... 15
Peniworþ	A peniworþ of witte..... 28
Perle	The Perle 70
Poems of Cambr. Dd...	Poems, in R. Rolle's Epistles..... 65
Pope Gregory.....	Legend of Pope Gregory..... 1
Praise	Praise of Women..... 42
Prop. Sanct. (1-26)...	Proprium Sanctorum 82
Psalm L.....	Psalm L 36
Psalter	Prose Psalter 48
Rembrun	Rembrun 24
Richard (Auch).....	King Richard 43
Richard (Caius).....	Richard Cœur de Lion..... 54
Robert	Roberd of Cisyle..... 84
Rouland	Rouland and Vernagu..... 31
Shoreham (1-7).....	Poems of William of Shoreham..... 49
Simonie	Þe simonie 44
Sinnes	On þe seven dedly sinnes..... 14
Speculum	Speculum S. Edmundi, in Pieces of York- shire Writers 85
Spir. Guy.....	Spiritus Guydonis 90
S. S.....	The Seuyñ Sages..... 18
Stacions	The Stacions of Rome..... 88
Story of England.....	The Story of England by Robert of Brunne 52
Swete Ihesu.....	Swete Ihesu 59
Swete S.....	Swete Susan 89
Talking	A talkyng of þe loue of God, in Pieces of Yorkshire Writers 85
Tars (Auch).....	The King of Tars..... 2

	NO.
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TribulationTwelve Profits of Tribulation.....	62
TristremSir Tristrem	37
Vernon Homilies (1-45) Homilies (Narrative portions only).....	80
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YsumbrasSir Ysumbras	55

INTRODUCTION

The problem of how and when the plural of the pronoun of the second person came to be used in English as a singular, as well as the allied problem of the substitution of objective case for nominative, has no doubt interested many persons and has been explained in a general way, it is true. But no one has attempted to show just when this new usage became established in England or how it got a foothold in the language. And so the present study has been undertaken with a view to scanning closely the literature of England written during approximately the second and third quarters of the fourteenth century and carefully classifying the findings, drawing such conclusions as may seem to be justified by the material in hand.

Just when this question of pronouns first presented itself to an Englishman cannot be determined very exactly; certainly it was not so very long after the Norman conquest that some native-born reader or hearer of the Norman language noticed the strange French use of the plural for the singular. For this use is already well established in *La Chanson de Roland*.²⁶ Then there must have been an historical occasion when first the French idiom was applied to the English language. We may suppose that it occurred in the address of a flattering noble to the king; but we shall never know whether it came from a Norman, blundering with the island speech, or from an Englishman aping French custom.²⁷

²⁶ For detailed information regarding the practice in the Old French see the studies of Schliebitz, Ganter, Rubin and Mussafia.

²⁷ It seems to be generally accepted that the English usage was originally taken over from the French; cf. Cambridge Hist. of Engl. Literature, I, 438. A good deal of indirect proof will be found in the present study in connection with the question of the relation of certain pieces to French originals. As the footnotes in the following chapters will indicate, the French originals of such of the pieces under consideration as are unquestionably translations or adaptations of French literature have been carefully compared with the Middle English works with a view to throwing as much light as possible on the influence of French usage upon Middle English. French texts so utilized are:

For 51—Langtoft's Chronicle ed. Wright, Rolls Series 1866-8.

53—Guillaume de Palerne ed. for Soc. des Anc. Textes Français, 1876.

66—William of Waddington's Manuel des Pechiez ed. E. E. T. S. Vol. 119.

68—Fierabras ed. Les Anciens Poètes Vol. 4.

I regret that it has been necessary to eliminate many of the very detailed footnote comparisons of pronominal usage in the above monuments, as originally given by Dr. Stidston. In all instances, however, where these monuments are involved,

Scarcely less important than the first oral cases of the use of the plural in English, in the function of the singular, would be the first recorded use of it. But here again we must suppose that the few, rather hesitating, examples found in English literature of the second half of the thirteenth century are not necessarily the earliest ever written in English.²⁸

Apparently the first explicit mention of the two forms, raising the subject to a place in literature, is in the *Legends* of Osbern Bokenam, from the life of St. Elizabeth.

891 ff. And so wele she groundyd was in loulynesse
That she nolde suffryn in no-maner wyse
Hyr maydyns hyr clepyn lady nere maystresse,
Nere, whan she cam, ageyn hyr for to ryse,
As among ientelys yt ys þe guyse,
Nere in þe plurere nounbyr speken hyr to
But oonly in þe syngulere, she hem dede deuyse,
As souereyns to subiectys be won to do.²⁹

After this I know of no such literary reference to the pronoun of address until it is shown with the relation of sing. and plur. quite reversed in the well known passage in *Twelfth Night* addressed by Sir Toby to Sir Andrew:

III, ii, 45 ff. Go, write it in a martial hand. Be curst and brief. It is no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention. Taunt him with the license of ink. If thou thou'st him some thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many lies as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England, set 'em down.³⁰

The next quotation, for which we have not long to wait, is, without doubt, the first philological reference to the subject. It is in the *Familiar Letters* of James Howell, the charming stylist and careful observer of the phenomena of life and language:

p. 596. And indeed the style of France at first, as well as of other countries, was to *Tutoyer*, that is, to *Thou* any person that one spake unto, tho' never so high:

it can be assumed that conclusions have been drawn only after such careful comparisons have seemed to warrant them (A. G. K.).

²⁸ See the study of the English pronoun for the thirteenth century by Dr. Kennedy.

²⁹ Edited by Horstmann, *Altenglische Bibliothek*, Vol. I.

³⁰ Cf. an unpublished master's thesis at Stanford University by Miss Myrtle Ethelia Harris, *The Use of Thou and You in Hamlet, Henry IV, and The Tempest*. 1909.

But when the *Commonwealth* of Rome turn'd to an *Empire*, and so much Power came into one man's hand, then, in regard he was able to confer Honour and Offices, the Courtiers began to magnify him, and treat him in the plural number by *You*, and by degrees to deify him by transcending Titles; as we read in *Symmachus*, in his Epistles to the Emperor *Theodosius*, and to *Valentinian*, where his style to them is, *Vestra æternitas, vestrum numen, vestra perennitas, vestra clementia*: So that *You* in the plural number, with other Compliments and Titles, seem to have their first rise with the Western Monarchy, which afterwards by degrees descended upon particular persons.³¹

Not long after, the grammarian, John Wallis, in his grammar of 1653, makes the following careful statement regarding the customary use of the pronoun:

- p. 77. Notandum item apud nos morem obtinuisse (sicut apud Gallos aliosque nunc dierum) dum quis alium alloquitur, singularem licet, numerum tamen pluralem adhibendi; verum tunc *you* dicimus, non *ye*. Singularem vero numero si quis alium compellet, vel dedignantis illud esse solet, vel familiariter blandientis.³²

For the xviiith and xixth centuries our modern usage has been pretty well fixed, and it is scarcely worth while to mention the brief notes to be found in such dictionaries as, for example, Johnson's, or the *Royal English Dictionary* of Fenning. Except for dialectal usage,³³ the subject is now limited to literary usage, and any question which may be raised as to the relative use of the sing. and the plur. to individuals must have to do with the personal judgment of authors in attempting to put more or less archaic language in the mouths of their characters and not to any possible motives of the characters themselves.

This hasty survey of the development in English of the use of the plur. pronoun of address in the function of the sing. will illustrate the futility of attempting to do justice in a single study to the entire history of the singular of formal address in English and will, on the other hand, emphasize the need of an intensive and detailed examination such as we are about to undertake, of the literature of the period in which the usage became fixed.

³¹ Quoted from the edition of Joseph Jacobs, London, Nutt, 1892.

³² This date is given by Dr. Ewald Flügel, from whose copy of the edition of 1674 the quotation is made: *Johannis Wallis . . . Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*.

³³ For modern dialectal usage see Murray, *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 188; Elworthy, *Grammar of the Dialect of West Somerset*, p. 177; Wright, *A Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill*, p. 118, etc.

I. INFERIORS TO SUPERIORS.

It must be admitted at the start, of course, that any attempt at classifying the many and often loosely defined characters of the heterogeneous literature under consideration must be at best only an approximation. The romancer presents his more idealized men and women as far above the level of real, personal, everyday life as the sinners of the religious writers are below it. It need not cause surprise if the saint of lowly birth uses better language than the most enlightened Saracen prince. Hence titles will be taken, as a rule, at their general face value.

1. *The Higher Classes to Royalty.*

In the various pieces of the Auchinleck MS. the sing. pronoun is used more frequently than the plur. form in addressing emperors and kings. It is so used by all the higher classes, and under all sorts of circumstances, and seems to be regarded as perfectly respectful. In *Katherine* the emperor is addressed in the sing. by the saint (85 et passim), by a converted knight (583 etc.), and by one of his own Saracen dependents (452). In *S. S.* masters two, three, four and seven use sing. forms exclusively in addressing the emperor (cf. 936 ff., 1393 ff., 1697 ff., 2542 ff., 2869 ff.). In *Guy* a duke in council *thous* his emperor (1935 etc.), and knights address him with the sing., coming to warn him of danger (2293 ff., 2539 ff.), coming on a peaceful embassy (2546 ff.), and in severe blame:

2717 Sir emperour, wat hastow do?
2727 ff. Hennes forward wil þe dred non,
 Schame anouȝ þai wil þe don;
 & jif þou haddest þe douk anhong,
 In þi lond men wold þe dred strong.

Guy, in all moods and under all circumstances, uses the sing. to the emperor (cf. 2891 ff., 3356 ff., 3382 ff., 4191 ff., 4404, etc.). An angry duke *thous* his emperor (203:4 ff.), as does a pilgrim-knight (170:6 ff.), and an earl being reinstated in favor with his emperor (216:10 ff.). In *Bevis* the earl addresses the emperor of Almaine with the sing. both in anger and later in entreaty for his life (224 ff.), while the young son of the family, Bevis, *thous* him not only as his father's murderer (424 ff.), but even when he is pretending friendship for him (3015 ff.). Similar cases may be cited from *Rouland* (e. g. 54 ff., 157 ff.), and from *Otuel*

(1225 ff., 1253 ff., etc.). In *Arthour* the twelve wicked barons, expecting of Fortiger a reward for the murder they have committed, use the sing. in addressing him (367 ff.), and Merlin always addresses King Uther thus informally, whether he speaks in his own person or in the disguise of a beggar (cf. 1994 et passim and 2457 ff.). Likewise Arthur is addressed by him informally (cf. 3425 et passim). In *Tristrem* the barons employ the sing. to Mark (1357 ff.). In *Chron. of England* and *Horn C.* there are only sing. forms in speeches to the king. With regard to the customs of address from Saracen subjects to their rulers there is nothing to be said other than has been said of Christian lands and peoples. Moreover, the examples of pronouns found in MS. Auchinleck show no distinction in usage as regards soudans and kings. (Cf. *Guy* 3107 ff., 3676 ff., *Floris* 1210 ff., *Rembrun* 36:1 ff., *Bevis* 1072 ff., *Otuel* 1116 ff., etc.).

In *Kyng Alisaunder* the sing. forms still preponderate in the speech of people of the higher classes to royalty altho the plur. is used not infrequently. Young Alexander uses the sing. to a king who insults him (884 ff., 978 ff.), a "riche almatour" uses it to an emperor (3045 ff.), a noble *thous* an old amiral (3110 ff.), etc.

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne*, while the plur. is used to kings with a frequency approaching that of the sing., still there seems to be no essential distinction in the use of the two either on the basis of the rank or the mood of the speaker. With no special significance the sing. is used in the speeches of St. Dunstan to Eilred (37:20 ff.), of a duke to Eilred (44:6), of an earl to Hardacnut (55:17), of a bishop to William (94:10 ff.), of Becket to Henry II (130:1), and of various others.

In the *Story of England* the pronouns addressed to royalty are about as numerous as those addressed to all other persons, and the sing. forms are in the majority. On the other hand, in *William of Palerne*, the sing. forms are so few in address to royalty as to justify the assertion that they are used to produce a special effect, as, for example, in the speech of William to his foe, the king of Spain (3017 ff., 4058 ff., etc.). In the pieces of MS. 175 of Caius Coll. Cambr. sing. forms are interspersed with plur. in speech to kings and emperors, so that no definite conclusions can be reached except that the plur. was common. For example, in *Richard*, Richard's barons use the sing. in addressing him (1370 ff.), as does a princess (2236), an archbishop (2681 ff., 2753,³⁴ 2862 ff.), and a Saracen prince in battle (7046 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* the sing. still preponderates and while the frequent oc-

³⁴ In 2857 it is probable that the *ye* which Weber prints is an error for *be*.

currence of the plur. is probably an evidence of respect, in specific cases there is nothing to lead one to suppose that it is more respectful than the sing. (Cf. 93 ff., 134 ff., 161 ff., 4097. etc.). The amiral Balan is frequently addressed by his subjects with the plur. pronoun, but more frequently with the sing., and this not only by subject kings, but by men of inferior position. (Cf. 2007 ff., 2148 ff., 2485 ff., 2871 ff., 3169 ff., 3213 ff., etc.)

Altho, in the examples from the Vernon MS., the sing. pronoun preponderates in address to royalty, yet there is a goodly number of occurrences of the plur. In *Cros* we find the sing. used to Constantine (212 ff.), in the address of an angel to an emperor (459 ff.), in St. Quiriac's defiance of Julius (459 ff.), etc. See also *Leg. Aurea* 7 (88 ff.), *Barlaam* (89 ff.), *Robert* (146 ff.), *Stacions* (280 ff., 641 ff.).

Since, as has already been noted, the use of the sing. in the Auchinleck MS. cannot be regarded as disrespectful, in the speech of the higher classes to royalty, the rather frequent examples of the plur. would seem to be due to a desire to flatter. So, in *S. S.*, the barons use it to their emperor as follows:

227 ff. Ye libbeth an a lenge lif:
Ye scholde take a gentil wife,
That you mit some solas do,
And biyeten children mo.
Inow ȝe habben of werldes won,
To make hem riche euerichon.

In *Rouland* the hero replies to the emperor with a plur. (619). In *Bevis*, likewise, the hero softens his speech to King Edgar as follows:

3501 ff. Ich bidde be-fore ȝour barnage,
ȝat ȝe me graunte min eritage!

In *Arthour* the servile barons address, consistently, plur. forms to King Fortiger (271 ff.), altho before he is king the sing. is used (211 ff.). In *Tristrem*, where the only king addressed with the pronoun is Mark, Tristrem's foster father uses only the plur. (718 ff., 724 ff.). In *Bevis* a friend of the hero uses the plur. ironically in addressing the Saracen ruler (4067 ff.), the men of the court, prejudicing the king against Bevis, use the plur., with the probable exception of a genitive *ȝe* (1206 ff.), and another king is so addressed by his nobles (4123).

In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Alexander, having exchanged places with one of his nobles, knows well what becomes his bit of sport and uses the plur. consistently to the temporary king:

7520 ff. Alisaunder saide, For this gome
Is from feor to us y-come,
And in youre freondhed trust;
Y rede you, by counseile best,
That ye leve, to his socoure,
Soche folk that beon to your honour,
And faileth him nought at this nede!

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* the peers use the plur. in speaking to Henry (134:11 ff.); Richard is addressed thus formally by his nobles (165:15 ff.), by the prince of Antioch (170:4), by a bishop (175:17 ff., 175:21 ff.), and in one exceptional case by Saladyn:

193:17 ff. SIR, said Saladyn, þank I auh þow conne,
þat þou me profers of þin, & has non enchesonne, etc.^{34.1}

The peers address King Philip of France with the plur. (141:25 ff., 144:19 ff., 144:29), and an English earl does likewise in one instance (144:4 ff.). And, finally, Saladyn is addressed with the form of respect *ȝe* once (196:20 ff.), and King Edward by the clergy (247:16). At one time Edward is addressed by his barons with the plur. (257:2 and 7 ff.), but later with the sing. (257:11).

In the *Story of England*, while the sing. forms predominate, as already noted, the plur. forms scattered, here and there, are clearly indicative of respect altho they are used spasmodically. Anacletus, a prisoner in the hands of Brutus, says to his captor:

1087 ff. Sire, he seide, do þour wille!
How mygh(t) y vs saue fro ylle,
Sey me, sire, on what manere;
& ȝyf y may, y wol þow here.

Later, Vortigern is addressed in the plur. by a knight (7575 ff.), and the Roman emperor by the twelve ambassadors returning (11922, 11932 ff.).

In *William of Palerne*, as we have noted above, the plur. is regularly used in address to royalty, the exceptional sing. expressing some special feeling such as contempt. So the plur. is used by a knight to the emperor (1112 ff., 1140), by a sick knight to the same emperor (1502 ff.³⁵), by a baron to the king of Spain (3748³⁵), and by his nobles to this same king of Spain when he is in captivity (4184).

^{34.1} Langtoft's original reads:

II, 106. Sir, dist Saladyn, gre te day saver,
Ke tu saunz deserte me vols honurer;

³⁵ In *Guillaume de Palerne* the plur. is used in the corresponding passages viz. 2752 ff. and 6430 ff.

In the pieces of Caius College MS. 175 only two instances occur where a person of one of the higher classes addresses royalty with the plur. exclusively, namely, in *Richard* (981 ff., 5934 ff.) and in *Ysumbras* (479 ff.).

The consistent use of the plur. in *Ferumbras* is not very common. Ogier addresses Charles with the plur. when interposing for Roland (183 ff.) and another peer does likewise (196 ff.). Once Oliver, deceiving the amiral as to the condition of himself and his comrades, uses the plur. with assumed humility (1170 ff.).

In *Gaywain* the hero consistently addresses King Arthur with the plur. (343 ff., 347 ff., 356 ff., 545 ff.).

The examples of inconsistent usage on the part of persons of the higher classes in addressing royalty are fairly numerous; indeed, as the rather poor lists just given show, few speakers among the characters of the varied literature under consideration use the plur. of formal address in a consistent manner. In *S. S.* the first master begins to address the emperor in the sing. but in a second speech he consistently uses the plur., returning, however, in later speeches to the sing. (670 ff., 684 ff., 695 ff.). The fifth master uses both forms in the same speech as follows:

2186 ff. Nai sire, and he finde your grace bifore,
Thi wif wolde he forlain haue nowt;
Yif thou hit leuest, thou art bicought,
Ac yif thou do thi sone duresse,
One the falle swich a destresse.

Similar cases are the speech of a baron in *Guy* (3813 ff.), of a knight in council with the king in *Rembrun* (17:1 ff. and 4; 18:4 ff.), of two friends of Darius in *Kyng Alisaunder* (1989 ff., 1994 ff.). A hostile knight, in *Kyng Alisaunder*, while trying to kill the emperor in battle, uses the sing. to him but later when he has been captured and is being tried, the plur., returning, however, to the sing. later (3984 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne*, while, for the most part, either the sing. or the plur. is used consistently, there is an occasional speech where the speaker lapses from one to the other. A duke addressing King Eilred uses both (41:14 ff. and 28 ff.), likewise Bruce addressing King David (116:7 ff.), and an archbishop addressing King Edward (283:22 ff., 284:14 ff.). In the last example it is to be noted, however, that the speaker, after having started with the less formal sing., seems to recognize that he has offended the king and deliberately shifts to the plur.

In the *Story of England* there is more or less of confusion in the use

of the two numbers. The Earl of Cornwall, in council with Octavius, uses both, but in separate speeches (6349 ff., 6455 ff.); an archbishop, sent to ask aid for Britain from the king of Brittany, uses the plur. with a single exception (6887-6898); the treacherous noble Vortigern addresses King Constans, who is under his domination, with both sing. and plur. (7117-7123); Hengist, addressing Vortigern, does likewise (7321-7; 7445 ff., 7464, 7499 ff., 7641 ff.); an archbishop addresses the king with similar inconsistency (8742-47); the Scottish bishops, ladies, etc., use both forms to King Arthur (10255 ff., 10269 ff., 10274-85); and, finally, the Saxon prince Octa, begging mercy at the hands of Aurelius, jumbles the two forms in a most absurd way:

8655 ff. 3our God ys of wel more myght;
 þat we on trowe, ar nought so right;
 He scheweþ miracle for þy loue;
 We ar byneþe, & 3e aboue;³⁶
 We ar ouer-comen, þer-fore we com;
 Mercy to craue, to þe we nom.
 Haue here þys cheyne, & do þy wille,
 Wheþer þat 3e wil vs saue or spille!³⁷
 We ar payed, wheþer þou wylt,
 We arn aknowe we haue agilt.
 To haue our lyues, 3yf þou wilt graunt,
 What so þou saist, we holde couenaunt
 To serue (þe) til our lyues ende,

In *Palmerne*, despite the fact that usage seems more firmly fixed in respect to sing. and plur., a few examples of mixed usage occur, notably in the speech of William to the captive king (4058 ff., 4134 ff., 4161 ff.; 4129 and 4150).³⁸

In *Richard (Caius)* an earl in respectful address to the king lapses from plur. to sing. (211 ff.), and the English nobles bringing Richard's ransom to the king of Germany are only partially polite (1222 ff.).

In *H. Synne* a squire, who is certainly in a position to know what polite society expects, confuses the two forms in addressing the king (4406 ff.).

A very noticeable confusion in the use of the more formal pronoun is to be found in *Ferumbras*. In speeches to Christian and Saracen rulers alike the two forms are intermingled, sometimes with evident reason,

³⁶ The MS. reads *we*, obviously a mistake. Petyt MS. reads *þou*.

³⁷ Petyt MS. reads *wheðir þou will*.

³⁸ The O. F. *Guillaume de Palerne* has only the plur.

sometimes without. Ferumbras, the Saracen, addressing Charles insultingly, uses only the sing. (93 ff.); later, however, when begging mercy, he uses both forms (1050 ff., 1056-65³⁹). Floripas, having become a rabid Christian, uses both forms while urging upon Charles the execution of her father, the amiral (5763 ff., 5819 ff.; cf. also 5869 ff.). Oliver, also speaking for Roland as well as offering his services, intermingles the sing. and plur. (279, 287 ff., 300). Hauteville, a traitor at heart, begins his advice to Charles with the plur. but shifts to the sing. (4163 ff.). Duke Richard shifts from one to the other without any apparent reason in speaking to Charles (4335-53), and Ferumbras shows equal inconsistency (5853 ff.). A Saracen king shifts from sing. to plur. in addressing Balan, the amiral (1128 ff., 1146 ff., 1174 ff., 1538 ff.). One can understand why Naymes uses the plur. in speaking to the Saracen king who has him by the beard, but his sudden shifting to the sing. form is rather surprising, under the circumstances (2210, 2214, 2228, 2251).

The Green Knight, in *Gayawayn*, addresses King Arthur with the sing. at times (259, 279), at other times with the plur. (cf. 295).

Of the few cases in the Vernon MS. where persons of the upper classes address royalty the speeches of Joseph, the hero, may be cited as an example of this shifting, perhaps. At first Joseph uses the plur. to the king, but upon becoming more intimate, the sing. (66 ff., 73 ff., 99 ff., 141, 334, 420 ff.). Joseph's son, Josaphe, commonly uses the sing. to the king (347 ff., 388 ff.); but in one instance where he is not wearing so conspicuously his robes of prophecy or threat he uses the plur. (373).

From the foregoing discussion all examples of the pronouns used by persons of the higher classes in addressing queens or empresses have purposely been omitted. Of the limited number of pronouns addressed to queens, in the Auchinleck MS., about one third are plur., and these from widely differing sorts of persons. In *Tristrem* Isolt is addressed by the brother-in-law of Tristrem with both forms (3114 ff., 3118 ff.). In *Orpheo* the king of faery *thous* the earthly queen (163 ff.). In *Kyng Alisaunder* a king disguised as an astrologer uses the sing. to the queen of Egypt thruout his deception of her (227 ff., 435 ff., 609 ff.). Alexander, however, playing the part of a messenger to a queen and finding that she has detected him, in a desperate attempt at verisimilitude tries to conceal himself under the use of the more respectful plur. (7654 ff.). In *Palerne* a priest, interpreting a dream for a queen, uses the plur. at the beginning and ending of each of his two speeches and largely thruout, but in the middle of each, the sing. (2924 ff., 3040 ff.). William, while a prisoner of the queen, addresses her with a plur. (3994 ff.); nobles sent

³⁹ In the O. F. *Fierabras* the insult is emphasized by the use of the sing. (p. 3); likewise a transition similar to that of the English occurs later (p. 55).

to the wicked queen use both plur. and sing., the former probably being due to their earlier respect for her and the latter to their present position of authority (4205 ff., 4248 ff.). William uses the sing. to this queen who is virtually his prisoner (4482). The prince of Spain uses both sing. and plur. in addressing the queen of Palerne, with no apparent reason for changing (4604, 4644 ff., 4624 ff., 4658 ff.). Messengers use the plur. to a queen (4933 ff.). And, finally, in *Tars (Vernon)* the messengers of the Saracen king address the plur. to the Christian queen (323 ff.) and in *Joseph* the hero, in the sole address to a queen in that piece, mixes his pronouns even in the same speech (623 ff., 663).

From the summaries and examples just given it will be quite evident that even in the speech of persons of the higher classes, who, of all people, should know what constitutes polite usage, and in address to royalty, where there would naturally be the greatest desire to make a good impression, for the period under consideration there is no very marked preference shown for the plur. form. Or, perhaps better, there is no strong objection to the sing. Speakers apparently feel that the plur. shows more respect, but the majority of them use the sing. Occasionally a speaker seems to choose the plur. deliberately in order to appease wrath, to show humility, to emphasize servility, etc. In most speeches, however, where the plur. is introduced the speaker is likely to shift to the sing. sooner or later. In some of the romances, notably in *Palerne* and *Richard (Caius)*, the plur. of respect has a definite place and one may say that for the period under consideration there is a growing recognition of the desirability of using the plur. form in speeches to royalty.

As regards the pronoun in address to queens there is apparently the same uncertainty, or indifference. Occasionally, as has been noted above, someone seems to select his pronouns with the intention of displaying special respect or contempt. But on the whole people of all classes show to the queen the same attitude in respect to the pronoun as to her royal spouse.

2. *The Lower Classes to Royalty.*

Inasmuch as messengers, physicians, chamberlains, etc., chiefly persons employed about the king, are of rather doubtful social standing in most cases, it seems best to class them as members of the lower classes. As far as results are concerned it makes little difference in the present investigation for they show the same vacillation in the use of the pronoun as do the members of the higher classes.

In the Auchinleck MS. the sing. is used more often. In *S. S.* two strangers, professional swindlers, address an emperor with the sing.

altho one might expect them to use the more flattering plur. under the circumstances (2065, etc.). Likewise the enraged populace uses the sing. to the same emperor (2143-6). In *Guy* the rascally steward uses, ordinarily, the sing. form to his royal master but shifts to the plur. when trying to injure Guy (3221 etc., 3760 ff.). A fisher bringing news uses both forms (206:10 ff.). Another messenger uses a few plur. forms in the midst of singulars fearing, perhaps, King Athelston's wrath at the bad news (7141 ff.). In *Bevis* a messenger from a lady changes from one form to the other in addressing the emperor of Almaine (130 ff.), in *Arthour* messengers use both forms (1375 ff., 1387 ff., 1717 ff.), in *Tristrem* the dwarf uses one plur. along with several sing. forms (2067 ff., 2581 ff.), in *Horn C.* only sing. forms are used in address to kings (490 ff., 721 ff., 919 ff.).

In *Kyng Alisaunder* a clerk uses the sing. to a king (504 ff.), the king of India's own messenger uses plur. as well as sing. in speaking to him (7289 ff., 7295 ff., 7301 ff.) altho he uses the plur. consistently to Alexander (7227 ff.), Darius is addressed by messengers in varying style (1672 ff., 1796 ff.), a Theban knight uses a sing. to Alexander in foul reproach (2691 ff.) while a Theban harper uses the same form with dignity (2852 ff.), the people of Athens, in supplication, employ the sing. (2950 ff.), a negro churl uses the plur. to Alexander except for one blundering *thou* (5604 ff., 5627 ff.), an anthropophagus, an old churl, a queer black bishop, and the trees of the sun and the moon all use the sing. form only (5959, 6759 ff., 6844 ff., 6858 ff., 6901 ff.). All of which might imply that rustics and "outlandish" folk would use the sing. with which alone they were familiar, in addressing royalty, and that their neglect of the more courteous form would be tolerated just as their general roughness and rudeness in manner and speech would be taken for granted.

Messengers still use the sing. regularly to kings in the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* (16:2 ff., 30:16 ff., 164:5 ff., 275:12 ff.), the Franks use the sing. to King Philip (179:16 ff.), but the steward of the Greek emperor addresses first the plur., then the sing., to his royal master (165:24 ff.).

In the *Story of England* the people use the sing. in inviting Brutus to be king (883 ff.), a wicked maker of strife uses the sing. to King Brennius (2835 etc.), the Picts invite Vortigern to the throne, using the sing. (7245 ff.), the people use the sing. to Uther (9125 ff.), and Arthur is *thoued* by a Roman embassy (11455 ff.). Only King Oswald's almoner uses the plur. in speaking to the king (19091 ff.).

In *Palerne*, in keeping with what has already been said as to a more marked use of the plur. form, we find the peasant boy, William, using a

plur. to the emperor both before he has entered his service and afterward (237 ff., 1097 ff.). A maid of the court also uses the plur. (2002 ff.). But ambassadors from the Greek emperor feel at liberty to begin their address to the Roman emperor with the sing. tho they soon change to the plur. (1440 ff.). The address of the troops to the emperor employs a respectful plur. (1112 ff., 1140 ff.).

In *Richard (Caius)* the sing. is used by Richard while in pilgrim's weeds to the king of Germany (732 ff.). Richard's jailer, who used the sing. to the prince, addresses the king of Germany consistently with the plur. (843 ff., 860 ff., 867 ff.). A messenger from Richard's betrothed uses both sing. and plur., the former apparently from the lady, the latter from himself:

1521 ff. The kyngs doughtyr, that is so free,
Sche greetes the wel by me:
With an hondryd knyghts, and moo,
Sche comes, as you to bedde goo.

A steward and a marshal address Richard with the plur. (1477 ff., 1553 ff.), but the sing. is used by a steward to an emperor (2125 ff.), by Saracen messengers to Richard (3359 ff., 5442 ff.) and to the soudan who sent them (3543 ff.), by Saracens to the king of France (3856 ff., 4694 ff.), by soldiers begging succor of Richard (4016 ff.), etc. A messenger, addressing Richard, uses first sing., then plur. (7011 ff.).

In *Ferumbras*, of the few speakers who address kings from the lower classes the majority prefer the sing. forms. Traitors address Charles with the sing. (313, 4023 ff., 4081 ff.), except that one changes to the plur. when he finds himself in the bad graces of Charles (4154). A Saracen giant *thous* Charles in abusive language (4669 ff.). The amiral is addressed in the sing. by a messenger (1630 ff.⁴⁰) and also by an engineer (3245 ff.⁴¹).

Even in the Vernon MS. the same lack of uniformity is observable. In *Barlaam* the king is addressed in the sing. by an unidentified person (89 ff.) and by the people (150 ff.), but a pseudo-merchant uses both sing. and plur. (323 ff., 543 ff., 574 ff.) as do also the king's leeches (587 ff.). In *Vernon Homilies* 32 a hermit uses *þi* to a king (55), in *Robert* the porter respectfully uses the plur. (115), in *Tars (Vernon)* messengers, from the Saracen king to a Christian queen, use the plur. (323 ff.), and from the queen (460 ff.).

While there is, possibly, a slightly increasing tendency shown by the

⁴⁰ Plur. in *Fierabras* (74).

⁴¹ *Fierabras* has the sing. also (p. 114).

lower classes to address the more respectful plur. form to royalty, the evidence is not very convincing. Messengers and ambassadors shift forms a great deal at times, perhaps, in an endeavor to represent more faithfully the persons from whom they bring messages; stewards and other court officers appear to be learning the new usage somewhat more quickly; the people, speaking *en masse*, almost always use the sing.

3. *Inferiors to Nobles.*

The examples in MS. Auchinleck of the use of the pronoun in address to nobles are at once unsatisfactory and very suggestive. They do not occur in such variety of circumstances as to form a broad basis for conclusions, for the person speaking is almost always a knight, and there are no examples of address from the common people. Moreover, in the examples of address with the plur. from knights to nobles there is nothing to lead one to suppose that these forms were induced by respect for a superior class; it seems more likely that they were not. In *Amis* the duke is addressed with the sing. by his steward (786 ff.), by the knight, his butler, (261 ff., 830 ff.), by another knight (1954 ff.), and by a squire (2037 ff.), but in the plur. by a knight who is playing the butler's part (1234 ff.). A leprous knight, a former friend of the duke, and this knight's boy follower, both use the sing. in speaking to the duke (2225 ff., 2107 ff.). In *Guy* dukes and earls are addressed in the sing. by all sorts of inferiors and at all times (cf. 691 ff., 926, 1187 ff., 1847 ff., 1921, 2463 ff., 5161 ff., 5247 ff., 5729 ff., etc.) except that a knight who has not succeeded in capturing Guy apologizes to his duke with what seems to be a conciliatory plur. (1533 ff.), Guy intermingles a few plurals while he is striving to ingratiate himself with Duke Otus (6115 ff., 6127 ff.), Guy also drops one plur. among sing. forms in asking to leave the service of an earl (1187 ff.), and several to an old earl in trying to justify his killing of the old earl's son (6841 ff., 6889 ff., 6913 ff., 6924 ff.), and, finally, a bishop on an embassy to an earl uses sing. and plur. as follows:

5615 ff. þe bischop answerd þer-of þou no drede:
Al siker ȝe beþ of þilke dede.

In *Arthur* the people use the sing. to a duke (7317 ff.), as does a knight in *Rembrun* (22:4 ff.), a knight to an earl in *Bevis* (3265 ff.) and to a prince (3547), the masters to the young prince in *S. S.* (362 ff.), St. Mergrete to the lord, in *Mergrete* (104 et passim), and by the sergeant to this same lord, except that he drops a plur. once (78 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne*, of the examples of address to the

"barons" all but two are in the sing. and mostly from royalty, never from the very lowest classes. In the few addresses of inferiors to superiors the sing. is used by knights to the duke of Normandy (70:21), and both sing. and plur. by a knight telling an earl of a fault (219:23).

In the *Story of England* the sing. is usually addressed to nobles by all classes. So Duke Margan is *thoued* by his fellows (2578 ff.), a Saxon uses the sing. to an old heir to the throne (8991 ff.), likewise the people to Brian (15901) and to the Lord of South Wales (16332).

There is little in *Palerne* to serve as a basis for conclusions regarding the address of inferiors to nobles. A knight and a duke in a fight use the sing. to each other (1246 ff.), but enemies usually do this.

The few examples from the Caius MS. which come under this head are somewhat more interesting. In *Richard (Caius)* a jailor, addressing respectfully a German prince, uses the sing. (755 ff.). A Saracen spy uses both forms to a Christian baron (4055 ff., 4070 ff., 4086 ff.). But Saracens use the sing. only to a Christian baron who takes the city (4142 ff.). In *Athelston* a messenger uses a sing. to an earl (205 ff.). Later, a messenger, in reporting from an archbishop, uses a sing. to an earl (719); when he is begging a horse he uses the plur. (730 ff.); when, mounted on the horse, he speaks an ironic farewell, he resumes the sing. (747 ff.).

In *Alquin*, which is supposed to be addressed altogether to the earl, Alquin commences with the sing. and employs it with great frequency thruout, but so pale is the attempt at dramatic fiction that both writer and reader lose sight of the earl so that when the plur. occurs (282, 292, 378, 529) it is no longer in address to the earl but to the readers.⁴²

The inferior seems to use his pronouns, in *H. Synne*, with a greater regard for effect in the few instances where nobles are addressed. A bondsman, complaining because his lord allows his cattle to roam in the churchyard, uses the plur. (8682 ff., 8699 ff.), while a captured knight, pretending he is but a common man, addresses the sing. to the earl, his captor (10553 ff.), but later when he confesses his rank, the plur. (10649 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* Christian nobles are addressed by the persons of the same faith with the sing. pronoun, except in one case. The only address from an inferior is that of a squire to Oliver, where the sing. is employed (220 ff.). Of Saracen speakers Ferumbras before, thruout, and after his duel with Oliver uses the sing. in addressing the latter (357 to

⁴² The very frequent *mon* could hardly be intended for an earl (cf. 201, 317, 333, 383, et passim).

867), except that two plurals at the last seem to display increased respect for his conqueror:

864 ff. þys hauberk y rede tak of me. & cast it oppon þyn owe,
þe sikerlukere þer-inne moze 3e. defendy þour body aþrowe.
þow hast þer-to grete nede. wyþ sarsyns þow art enclos,
þe grete god þe helpe & spede. & kepe þe fram þy fos!

A Saracen insultingly *thous* a captive peer (2753 ff.).

In *Gawayn* the hero appears to regard the lord and lady of the castle as in some respects his superiors and addresses the lord with the plur. exclusively thruout his stay (839, 1037, etc., 1110 ff., 1963 ff.).^{42.1}

In the Vernon MS. examples of address to persons of distinctly noble rank are few. In *Vernon Poems* 31 an earl is addressed with a sing. by a prisoner (756 ff.). In *Gregorius* a knight replies to the earl with the sing. except for one uncertain plur. (123 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea* 5 St. Bernard uses the sing. to a duke (1000 ff.).

Perhaps it is safe to deduce from the foregoing examples an increasing tendency on the part of those who know themselves inferiors to use a more respectful plur. to dukes, earls, barons, etc. But as compared with their attitude toward royalty, the attitude of inferiors toward nobles is less careful in the choice of the pronoun. Among the examples given the plur. is the exception, and there is usually a very apparent reason for its use.

4. Inferiors to Knights.

In the Auchinleck MS. with two exceptions knights are always addressed by inferiors with the sing. pronoun. In *Amis* the sing. is used by a youth asking aid of a knight (1930 ff.), in *Guy* by the host of an inn (1935 ff.), by a serving maid (4360), by a peasant (5806 ff.) and by a man (6827 ff.). In *Bevis* the exiled hero uses the sing. to a Saracen knight (547), a jailer, in scorn, uses the sing. to a knight who is his prisoner (1594 ff.), and the sing. is addressed to knights by a man (2900), by a messenger (4264 ff.) and by the people in rage (4426 ff.). In *Tristrem* the porter and "huscher" employs the sing. to a travel-worn knight at the door (620 ff., 633 ff.) as does also the dwarf to Tristrem (2073 ff.). A giant *thous* Tristrem, not only in combat but later as to his master (2326 ff., 2795, etc.). A giant, in *Bevis*, who usually addresses the sing. to Bevis, both as his enemy (2520) and as his master, later (2722 ff.), shifts to the plur. once (2741 ff.). In *Guy*, also, in a single instance a plur. form is used by a pilgrim to a knight (1817 ff.).

^{42.1} For a discussion of his attitude toward the lady see Section 5.

In the *Story of England* only two cases can be cited where inferiors address knights, namely, when an old woman warns a knight (12244 ff.) and when the Britons address one (13018 ff.). In both instances the sing. is used.

In *Palerne*, while it is not always easy to decide just how the speaker ranks William under various conditions, perhaps it may be noted here that Alexandrine, maid of Melior, always uses the sing. to the youth (890, etc.⁴³).

Knights are addressed with the sing., in *Ysumbras*, by a fowl (43 ff.), by an angel (538 ff.) and by a "little knave" (79 ff.), but with the plur. by some herdsmen (89 ff.).

In *Gawayn* the hero is addressed in the plur. once by the porter of the castle (814), and regularly by a guide, altho one sing. is employed, apparently by chance (2110 ff.), and others in annoyance, (2124 ff., 2140 ff.).

In the Vernon MS. knights are addressed by a great variety of persons, human and supernatural. For the sake of convenience some examples will be offered here where the speaker is, perhaps, not an inferior, in the strict sense of the word. Knights are *thoued* in *Gregorius* by a seaport guard (401 ff.), in *Homilies 4* by the fiend (34 ff.) and by the Virgin (105 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea 3* a virgin uses the sing. to a knight about to join the noble army of martyrs (408, etc.). In *Barlaam* a pseudo-merchant *thous* a gentleman of the court (285 ff.). In *Homilies 10* the sing. is addressed to a rich knight by a bishop (23, etc.) and by a beggar, alike (32 ff.). In *Vernon Homilies 16* the sing. is used to the knight Placidus by a supernatural hart (95 ff.), by God (179 ff.) and by a voice out of Heaven (1016). The plur. is used by a serving boy to the father of the saint, in *Alexius* (393 ff.), but both forms occur in the speech of the saint to his unrecognizing father (274 ff.). In *Barlaam* a poor leech mixes his pronouns in speaking to a knight (193 ff.).

From the rather scanty evidence given it would be unsafe to attempt any very definite conclusions. Knights seem to be *thoued* by their inferiors very generally. Moreover the plurals do not appear to be increasing very rapidly as time goes by.

5. To Ladies.

Accustomed as we are to emphasize the chivalry of the Middle Ages and especially its attitude toward woman we should probably be inclined to deem it *a priori* sufficient reason for classing address to ladies under that of inferiors to superiors. Let us see whether the facts will justify

⁴³ Invariably plur. in *Guillaume de Palerne* (1483 ff.).

such a classification. As regards queens we have already seen that they are treated no more respectfully, perhaps slightly less, than their royal consorts.

In the comparatively few speeches addressed to ladies in the pieces of the Auchinleck MS. only three instances of the use of the plur. occur. It would appear, indeed, that the sing. forms were correct from persons of a much lower station in life to the wives of nobles or knights. In *Amis* a lady is *thoued* by a child messenger (1769 ff.). In *Guy* a page of a hermit uses the sing. to a countess to whom he is sent (291:7 ff.). So in *Bevis* the sing. is employed by a messenger to his lady (82, etc.), by a knight to the same lady (283) and by the tutor of her son (483), by Bevis requesting food, to the lady of the castle (1839 ff.), and by a giant to Josian whom he once served (3666 ff.). In *Arthour* the king's butler, communicating his master's toast to the wife of a duke, uses the sing. (2279 ff.). Likewise the sing. is used by Merlin to the wife of a knight (2712) and by Arthur, disguised, to Guinevere, the daughter of his host (6544). In *Tristrem* the Irish harper who has carried off Isolt addresses her with the sing. (1876 ff.). The plur. is used in *S. S.* to the widow by her solicitous friends (2588 ff.) and by the knight at the churchyard (2631 ff.). In *Bevis* the hero, disguised as a pilgrim, uses both sing. and plur. to Josian (2145 ff., 2169 ff.). And, finally, in *Tristrem*, the hero while trying to soothe the anger of Isolt, who wishes to kill him as the slayer of her uncle, judiciously uses the plur. altho he later shifts to the sing. (1598 ff., 1607 ff., 2108 ff.).

In *Palerne* the pronoun appears to be selected with more care in address to ladies. Alexandrine, cousin and companion of Melior, uses the plur. in addressing her (591 ff., 634 ff., 803 ff., 970 ff., etc.). The one use of the sing. seems to be in a moment of mutual feminine confidences which break down the restraint of the more formal plur. (984 ff.). A messenger, also, in reporting to the emperor's daughter uses the plur. (1342, etc.) except for one careless *hi* (1359). On the other hand the sing. is addressed to the cousin of the princess by the princess herself (602 ff., 996 ff.), by William (956 ff.), and by the emperor in anger (2036). Once also a queen uses a sing. to her maid (3182 ff.).

In *Ferumbas* the only speeches coming under this head are addressed to Floripas, the Saracen princess. From the jailor, who might be expected to use the more formal pronoun, only the sing. is found (1220 ff.). The same is true of Floripas' governess, whom a little more respect might have saved from a shocking end (1350 ff.). With three exceptions Floripas is addressed with sing. forms by the peers. Oliver in prison uses the sing. (1276 ff.), likewise Bernard, the ladies' man

(1299 ff.), Naymes (2044), Roland (2067, 2574, 2783, 2804, etc.), a Saracen burglar, scornfully (2433 ff.), and, finally, the peers when thanking the princess (5095 ff.). But Gwylmer, the Scot, in a cynically irrelevant remark to her uses the plur. (1304 ff.), Richard, possibly conscious of the anger he is likely to awaken, also uses the plur. once (2056), and at two different times Roland addresses a few plur. forms to Floripas (2529 ff., 2930 ff.⁴¹).

In *Gawayn* we have already noted that the hero uses the plur. to his host, the lord of the castle. To his hostess, who is pretending amorousness toward him, as a test, he also addresses the plur. (1214, 1302 ff., 1488 ff., 1803 ff.). Once, only, when his hostess employs the more intimate sing. in an especially amorous speech, Gawayn, with his characteristic gallantry replies with a sing. Feeling, perhaps, the impropriety of the form, however, he at once reverts to the plur.

1801 ff. I wolde I hade here
þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,
For ȝe haf deserued, forsoþe sellyly ofte
More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche myȝt,
Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot naked;
Hit is not your honour to haf at þis time
A gloue for a garysoun,

In the pieces of the Vernon MS. the few examples of address to ladies all show the sing., namely, in *Gregorius* from one lady to another (166) and from a knight (215 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 5 from a holy man to Bernard's mother (51 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 6 to the mother of a saint from a child in a vision (144 ff.) and from a bishop (170), and in *Barlaam* from a prince to a seductive princess (649 ff.). Perhaps it might be well to note in passing that the sing. is used in a number of instances to women of the middle or lower classes in the Vernon MS., notably in *Poems* 39 where a hermit and the Virgin address a harlot (3:60 ff., 3:152 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 2 in the remonstrance of St. Ambrosius to an Arian maiden (225 ff.), in a conversation, in *Leg. Aurea* 4, between a woman and a witch (40 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 5 (950, 961 ff.), in *Euphros.* (85 ff., 157 ff.), in *Vernon Homilies* 37 (24 ff., 171 ff., 295 ff.), in *Spir. Guy.* (p. 321 ff.), and in *Joseph* (638 ff.). Once, in *Leg. Aurea* 7, Savina is addressed with the plur. by her maid altho they both employ the sing. ordinarily (209 ff.). Also, in *Susan*, in the address of the elders to Susanna, a plur. is used along with several singulars (135 ff.).

Any assumption that a lady, during the period under consideration,

⁴⁴ Possibly other persons are included here also.

was addressed more formally as regards the pronoun, would scarcely be warranted by the evidence at hand. There is to be seen a slight increase in the number of plurals in pieces of a more romantic nature, such as *Palerne* and *Gawayn*; but this is hardly more noticeable than in address to kings, nobles, etc.

6. To Ecclesiastics.

As in the case of ladies, so also toward all persons of ecclesiastical life one would naturally expect to find a somewhat more respectful form of address than toward the ordinary layman. Did the use of the *pluralis reverentie* in Latin at a somewhat earlier date to the higher church dignitaries and the feeling of respect which the layman was supposed to feel toward priests, bishops, etc., make any appreciable difference in the choice of the pronoun addressed to persons of this class?⁴⁵

In the pieces of the Auchinleck MS. the plur. is the exception. The sing. is used in *Tars* (*Auch.*) to a priest, brought out of the soudan's prison, by both the soudan and his wife (874 ff., 724 ff.), in *Owain* to his bishop by Owain (35:4 ff.), in *Magdalena* to both priest and bishop by the saint (571 ff., 637 ff.), in *Guy* to "sir abbot" by the hero (1625 ff.), and in *Bevis* to the bishop by a giant about to be baptized, who protests in a most scandalous manner (2595). The polite form appears in *Lai* in the speech of a porter who is consulting the abbess (205 ff.), and of a rich knight who is flattering her with promises of endowments (275 ff.). Pilgrims and hermits, both real and pretended, are addressed always with the sing., in *Magdalena* by St. Peter (369 ff.), in *Guy* by the hero, who desires to bury a comrade (1603 ff.), by an emperor (170:10 ff.), by a wicked duke (173:8 ff.), by an angel (284:4 ff.), in *Bevis* by the hero (1317 ff., 2059), in *Arthour* by a justice (962) and the child Merlin (1182 ff.), and in *Tristrem* by a knight (606 ff.).

In *Homilies*, while the sing. is regularly used to the various persons in religious life there are a few cases where respect is quite plainly shown by the use of the plur. A monk uses the plur. to a fellow monk (30:13 ff.), altho later as a ghost he uses a sing. to the same brother (32:23). A pilgrim addressing the supposed St. James respectfully uses the plur. (54:16 ff.) altho the saint is naturally addressed with the sing. A fiend uses the sing. to St. Makary (70:9), and an archbishop *thous* an abbess (80:13 ff.). The archbishop is similarly addressed by his people (91:3 ff.), by an inspired child (91:21 ff.), and by an angel (92:13 ff.).

⁴⁵ Cf. Ehrismann: Dutzen und Ihrzen im Mittelalter. Zeitschr. f. deut. Wortforschung 1:117-149. 1900.

One nun addresses her abbess with the plur. (82:7 ff.) while another uses the sing. (166:10 ff.). A bishop addresses St. John with the plur. (113:26) but St. John, with one exception, uses the sing. to the bishop (112:17, 114:11, etc.). A usurer *thous* a bishop (142:9 ff.), a hermit uses a sing. to a monk (150:15 ff.), and an abbess, making a confidant of a nun, uses the sing. also (166:3 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne*, Baliol, respectfully addressing the Pope, use the plur. (265:17). King Edward, in his conversation with the archbishop, uses the sing. for the most part (284:7 ff.). Some of the plurals scattered thru his remarks may be construed as sing. in meaning but for the most part they seem to include others of the clergy associated with the archbishop. Later, clerics use the plur. to the Pope (320:18 ff.).

In the *Story of England* the king of Brittany uses the plur. to the archbishop sent from England (6943 ff., 6953 ff., 6970 ff.). The sing. is used by a noble beguiling a prince who has renounced the world (7067 ff.), by Ethelbert to St. Augustine (15053 ff.), and by Christ to the same saint (15229 ff.). St. Augustine addresses the Bishop of Bangor with the sing. but the latter replies with the plur. (15303 ff.).

In the romances of the Caius MS. all persons of religious life are addressed with the sing. In *Richard (Caius)* it is used by the king of Germany to Richard, who comes disguised as a pilgrim (725 ff.), and by Richard to an archbishop (2867). In *Ysumbras* it is employed by a lady to a palmer (604 ff.), and in *Athelston* by a knight and by knightly messengers of the king to an archbishop (518 ff., 533 ff.).

Of the fairly numerous examples of address to ecclesiastics in *H. Synne* only three show plur. forms of the pronoun. The sing. is used, for example, by a Saracen priest to a monk who wishes his daughter (240 ff.), by a hermit to a monk (281 ff., 308 ff.), by an angel to a hermit (1800 ff.), by Maumet to an infidel priest (228 ff.), by two good women to an abbot (1941 ff.), by the people to a priest (3014), by an abbot to a hermit (8483 ff.), etc. The witch addresses both sing. and plur. to the experimenting bishop (544 ff., 550 ff.). A ghost of a monk, addressing his fellow, uses the sing. except for one meaningless plur. (3600 ff., 3611 ff.). St. John Chrysostum *thous* a deacon who replies with the plur. (8858 ff., 8869 ff.).

The Vernon collection of religious pieces supplies an extensive list of church dignitaries and saints. There can hardly be a doubt that it is the work of a man of "religion" and the somewhat disproportionate number of plural forms would appear to reflect a desire to do in a small way what the entire collection does in a large way, namely, show the impor-

tance and dignity of the Church. The sing., it is true, still predominates in address to ecclesiastics but the number of plurals is far from inconsiderable. Moreover they are scattered with rather surprising evenness over all the clerical ranks from obscure priests to the Pope himself, and are used by persons of all classes of society.

In *Vernon Poems* 47 Augustine, accepting the reproof of Gregory, uses the plur. (329, 349). In *Theophilus* a clerk addresses the sing. to a pope (66 ff.). In *Stacions* the sing. is twice used to a pope by an emperor (265 ff., 643).

Of the speeches to bishops, abbots and priors about one quarter contain plur. forms of the pronoun. In *Gregorius* the plur. is used by a rich man to an abbot (309). To a bishop, in *Leg. Aurea* 2, who flatteringly uses the plur. to the emperor the latter replies with the same form of courtesy (1073 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea* 6 three instances of the use of the plur. occur, namely, in the speech of a child in a vision to a bishop (927 ff.), in that of a sick man to St. Augustine (1103 ff.), and in that of Gregory to Innocent of Africa (1253 ff.). In *Euphros.* a youth addresses both sing. and plur. to an abbot (295 ff.). In *Theophilus* an ex-clerk uses the plur. respectfully to a bishop (285 ff.) and in *Spir. Guy.* uses the more respectful form to a prior (296). The restless spirit commonly uses the sing. to the prior (cf. 297 et passim), but occasionally the plur. (299, 300, 312, 313, 332, 333). The sing. is used in *Leg. Aurea* 2 to Ambrosius by the people (143 ff.), by an officer (701 ff.), by a knight (962 ff.), and by the emperor (1008 ff.), in *Vernon Homilies* 7 by an archbishop to an abbess (61 ff.), and to the archbishop by his people, a child and an angel (332 ff., 351 ff., 369 ff.), in *Vernon Homilies* 12b by a nun to an abbess (53 ff.), etc.

Of the numerous examples of address to monks, priests, hermits, in the Vernon MS. only one shows the plur., namely, in *Vernon Poems* 31, where a ghost uses a single plur. to a priest whom he later addresses with the sing. only (460 ff.). On the other hand, if the form of confession can be accepted as authoritative as given in *Forma*, the sing. is the proper form to address to a priest:

p. 340. and to þe mi gostliche fader

Other examples of the use of the sing. may be seen in the speech of a forward girl to a putative monk in *Leg. Aurea* 4 (205 ff.), by a maiden, in *Euphros.*, to two different monks (146, 216 ff.), in *Vernon Homilies* 14 by an abbot to a monk (86, etc.), by a repentant harlot, in *Homilies* 27, to a hermit (39 ff.), by a monk's ghost to a former fellow, in *Homilies* 43

(23 ff.), etc. From the emperor and the soudan to the lowest repentant, the sing. is regularly addressed to ecclesiastical persons of this group.

In address to various saints not included in the preceding class a few plurals appear altho, as a rule, the sing. is preferred. In *Leg. Aurea* 5 St. Bernard is *thoued* by a voice, by an angry canon, by a monk, an abbot in a vision, and the devil in the guise of an old woman (388 ff., 473 ff., 868 ff., 1095, 1190); but the plur. is used by a reprobate monk and by a clerk (765 ff., 1050 ff.). But later the latter indignantly *thous* the saint (1061). In the speech of a credulous pilgrim to the devil disguised as St. James of Compostella in *Vernon Homilies*, sing. and plur. occur side by side:

5:32 ff. . . . lord, ich am al redi here
Euere to beo. boxum þe to
And don. al þat 3e bidde me do.

Other passages in the *Homilies* show only the sing. as, for example, the speech of the devil to St. James (5:58), a fiend to St. Makaire (6:41), monks to Maryne (14:172), etc. And, finally, in *Vernon Poems* 4, the author mixes sing. and plur. curiously in a prayer to St. Magdalen (91 ff.).

Were it not for the rather pronounced testimony of the Vernon MS., conclusions regarding the use of the pronoun to persons of "religion" would not differ greatly from those relating to the other classes of society already considered. Along with evidences of a slowly growing tendency to use the plur. pronoun to persons of different ranks we have seen many examples of the continued employment of the sing. to high and low alike. Perhaps the formality attaching to intercourse with the Pope and a few other of the higher church dignitaries has made the speaker inclined to use the plur. for policy's sake, but the respect generally felt for the saints does not yet seem to demand the plur. It is only in the strongly colored contents of the Vernon MS., to answer the question asked at the beginning of this section, that there begins to appear rather strong evidence that, by persons in religious life, at least, it was felt that the choice of pronouns should be made to display a certain degree of respect toward saints, bishops, archbishops, perhaps toward all members of the class.

7. *Children to Parents.*

In the Auchinleck MS. children commonly address their parents with the less formal sing. Yet there are some cases of the use of the plur. by a child to its parent; and these, altho they are by no means consistent, always indicate respect. Such cases occur only in the higher ranks of society, but there is too little evidence concerning usage in the lower

classes to warrant any conclusions. In *Tars* (*Auch.*) the king is addressed by his daughter with both sing. and plur. (232 ff., 249 ff.). In *Bevis* the Saracen princess employs the sing. to her royal father (658-670): but in a later speech, wishing to be conciliatory, she shifts to the plur. temporarily (934 ff.). In *Guy* a young knight uses the plur. once to his father, the earl's steward, along with sing. forms (754, 1221, 1248). Another knight also speaks to his father with the plur. of respect (5026 ff.). In *Bevis* a youth in an exceptionally courtly dialogue admits one charming plur. form into an address to his lady mother (2657 ff., 7662 ff.). The sole plur. in *Tristrem*, in this connection, is in the address of the young hero to his travel-worn foster father and apparently owes its existence to the exigencies of the rime as the sing. is used ordinarily (661 ff., 914-919). The sing. is used, on the other hand, in *Bevis*, by the knight Bevis to his wicked mother, the queen (3465-6), in *Tristrem* by Isolt to her queen mother (1583 ff.), in *Guy* by Felice to her father, the earl (9:2-5, 36:4), in *Rembrun* by a knight asking for his father's blessing (122:6), in *Arthour* by the hero to his foster father (2954 ff.), and by Wawain to his mother (8537-8), in *S. S.* by a young married woman consulting her mother about domestic difficulties (1825 ff.), in *Assumptio* by Jesus to the Virgin Mary (326 ff.), etc.

The sing. is used, in *Homilies*, to Herod by his stepdaughter (40:4 ff.) and by Jesus to his mother (119:12 ff.).

The sing. is also used in *Ayenbite* in a hypothetical case of address by a son to his father, a knight (117:1 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* in one instance where a king uses the sing. to his son the latter replies with the plur. (142:12.).

Of the two cases in the *Story of England* where children address parents the speeches of Ragan and Cordelia to Lear show the sing. (2301 ff., 2309 ff.) while Brennius uses the plur. to his mother (3187 ff.).

In *Palerne* the pronouns used by children in addressing their parents show that in the opinion of the translator and scribes of *Palerne* the correct form from child to parent was the plur. just as the correct form from parent to child was the sing. Young William addresses his supposed father, the cowherd, with the plur. and, with one slight exception (366), he continues to use the plur. even after the prospect of worldly elevation (cf. 262 ff., 354 ff., 359 ff.). In the grand *finale*, however, when the cowherd comes to the court of his foster son the forms of address are reversed and while the cowherd now employs the more respectful plur. William uses the sing. of the pronoun (5365, etc.). A king is addressed with the plur. by his son (3986 ff.). Alphonse addresses the wicked queen, his mother, with the sing. (4469 ff.), but to his father he replies uni-

formly with the plur. (4579 ff.). The same nice usage between parent and child is shown also in the address and reply of an emperor and his married daughter :

5115 now, dere dougter, i þe preie. do bi mi rede.
5137 i hope, sire, to heuen king. þour hest so wirche,

The same interchange of sing. and plur. occurs also in the conversation of the emperor and his niece (5156, 5161 ff.). William, speaking to the queen, his unknown mother, on various occasions from her first appearance in a hind's skin until her attempt to fall at his feet in gratitude, uses the plur. (3250, 3684 ff., 3701 ff., 3959 ff., 5165 ff.). Once, however, either inadvertently or with a certain tenderness, he lets a gen. sing. slip in (3701 ff.).

In the pieces of Caius Coll. MS. parents *thou* their children and the children use the plur. in reply, with a single exception. In *Richard* the king of Germany is addressed in the plur. by his daughter (1575 ff.). Another king is likewise addressed in the plural by his son (1695 ff.). In *Ysumbras*, however, a father is addressed by his son with the sing. (768 ff.).

In *Infancia* in all speeches only the sing. form of the pronoun is found. The boy Jesus and his mother both use it (115, etc., 460 ff.), and a rich Jew and his son dispute about the latter's playing with Jesus (535 ff.).

All examples of address to parents by children in *H. Synne* show the use of the less formal sing. A man and his little son converse with the sing. (1143 ff.), Jephtha's daughter *thous* him (2870 ff.), a parish priest is addressed by his son with the sing. (9111 ff.), and perhaps, for the sake of completeness those passages should be included, in *Medytacyuns*, where Jesus addresses God, his father (259 ff., 311 ff., 645 ff., 690 ff., 711 ff., etc.).

The examples of the pronoun used, in *Ferumbras*, between relatives, are confined to the family of Balan the amiral. Floripas regularly addresses her father with the plur. (1988 ff., 1992 ff., 1998 ff., 2022). Once, only, a sing. form slips in, with no apparent reason :

1998 ff. Fader, quap sche, let beo þyn haste. it is wel neȝ þe non,
Hit were ful longe þow to vaste. or þis were al y-don.
Takeþ hem to me al þe hepe. and goþ ȝe to þour mete,
And sykerliche y wil hem kepe. þe wyle þat ȝe doþ etc.

Ferumbras, however, trying to induce his captured father to forsake his heathen religion, addresses him with the sing. exclusively (5657 ff., 5777 ff., 5833 ff.).

In the *Perle*, in the long conversation between father and daughter, there is an interesting, tho perplexing, interchange of plurals and singulars on the part of both parent and child. To the sing. which the father first employs the daughter begins to reply with the plur. (257 ff.). After a few lines, however, she shifts to the sing. (263 ff.). In her next reply she begins with the sing. (291 ff.), then changes to the plur. (305 ff.). And so she continues to vacillate, sometimes using the sing. exclusively (337 ff., 397 ff., 463 ff., 612 ff.), sometimes intermingling the two (696 ff., 700 ff., 759 ff., 856 ff., etc.).

In the Vernon MS. in a fairly generous list of examples of the speech of children to parents the sing. is used, the two cases of the use of the plur. apparently having little bearing on the question of social rank. The sing. is used by Pope Gregory to his mother, in *Gregorius* (551) and in *Vernon Poems* 29 (82 ff., 149 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 6 by St. Augustine to his mother (155 ff.), in *Euphros.* by a daughter to her father (622 ff.), in *Joseph* by the son to his father Joseph (277 ff.), by Jesus to the Virgin in *Poems* 36 (459, etc.), in *Speculum* (257) and in *Talking* (362), by Jesus to God the father in *Poems* (35:913, 36:563, 40:2:31, etc.). Once, where a Jew is addressed with the sing. by his father, he replies with plur. forms which may be understood to include others beside the father:

Cros 253 ff. Leoue Fader, i seide, þo what eydele ow Allas
Whi wolde ȝe hym to depe do, whonne þat he
good was:

In *Tars*, also, the princess uses both sing. and plur. to her royal father, tho in different speeches (226 ff., 245 ff.). And, finally, in *Vernon Poems* 38 a prince (Jesus) commonly uses the sing. to his father the King, but once the plur. ȝe (543 ff.).

On the whole the evidence just offered seems to show a disposition on the part of the upper classes to require the more formal plur. from children to parents. The greater part of this evidence occurs in the pieces of a more romantic nature, whereas in most of the religious literature and especially where characters are introduced of no special social rank the older sing. is still given the preference.

8. To Other Elders.

The material which can be offered under this head will, of necessity, be of doubtful fullness and rather miscellaneous because the ages of the characters of the romances, especially, are so uncertain that it is hard to draw a line between those who are to be regarded as youthful, and therefore owing respect to those whom they address, and those who are to be classed as adults.

In *S. S.* an old physician and his nephew and pupil *thou* each other (1108 ff.). In *Bevis* to the sing. of the bishop his nephew, a knight, replies with both sing. and plur. (2582 ff.). In *Tristrem* the hero uses plur. as well as sing. forms to his uncle, Mark (cf. 681 ff., 765 ff., 1147 ff., 1851 ff.). Perhaps these passages should be considered, also, from the standpoint of the address of inferiors to kings (cf. Section 1) since at first the relationship is not known.

In *Homilies* a youth, St. John's protégé, addresses him with the sing. (115:14). Likewise, as has already been noted, an archbishop is *thoued* by an inspired child (91:21 ff.).

In the *Story of England* Brian regularly uses the plur. to his uncle, the king, but a sing. once, apparently for the sake of the rime (15584, 15601 ff.).

In *Athelston* youths use the sing. to their uncle, a treacherous earl (793 ff.).

In *Infancia* the boy Jesus addresses his master, a carpenter, with the sing. (663 ff., possibly, also, 671 ff.).

In *H. Synne* a child *thous* a rich man (6026 ff.). Naturally a child is instructed to use the sing. in renouncing Satan (4664 ff.).

In *Leg. Aurca* 5 a monk uses the sing. to his little brother, but the child replies with the plur. (279 ff.). In *Ipotis* a child (really Jesus) interchanges sing. and plur. with more frequency, perhaps, than in any case hitherto found; he uses the plur. (60 ff., 159 ff.), sing. (166, 186 ff.), plur. (188, 200, 265, 316 ff., etc.), sing. (393 ff.), etc. In *Joseph* a child uses the sing. to a king (210). In *Vernon Homilies* 13 the fiend in the guise of a boy uses the sing. to a hermit (10 ff.).

Besides the examples given above a few will be found in preceding sections where children address kings, earls, knights, etc. While the sing. forms predominate it is hardly safe to attempt to draw conclusions from the evidence at hand.

9. To God and the Pagan Deities.

At the outset it may be said that the sing. was regularly used in prayer or address in general to God and Jesus. And yet there are a few interesting examples of the use of the plur. which it will be worth while to note carefully. In the Auchinleck MS. the sing. is employed to Christ and God except in one instance. It is used in *Tars* by the princess, who later becomes the unwilling wife of the soudan (62 ff.), in *De Creat.* by Eve (348 ff.), in *Oswain* by the author (143:4). In *Harrowing* the Lord is addressed with the sing. by Satan (85 ff.), by Adam and Eve (152 ff.), by Abraham (182 ff.), etc. In *Guy* knights use the sing. in

prayer to God (4341, 7222, 102:6 ff., 166:10), in *Bevis* also (385), and elsewhere. Once, only, in *Mercrete*, the saint uses the plur. to Jesus tho a little later she reverts to the sing.:

- 69 ff. Jhesu Crist mi lord, / to ȝou y me rend;
 In ȝou was no beginning, / no neuer schal ben ende;
 Ȝif it be ȝour wille, / ȝour angel ȝe me sende!
 74 ff. Jhesu crist, mi lord, / y toke me to ȝe;
 Blepeliche wald y, for ȝi loue / martird to be.

In *Homilies* only the sing. form of the pronoun is addressed to God and Jesus, namely, in the address of the author (1:10 ff. et passim), of God the father to Christ (9:10 ff.), of the rich Simon to Jesus (17:26), etc.

The sing. is used exclusively, also, in address to Father and Son in *Ayenbite* by David (93:9 ff.), by Esther (216:11 ff.), by certain men (89:13 ff.), in *Psalter* by God to Jesus (109:1 ff.), in the *Story of England* by an earl (8555), by monks (15093 ff.), by the people (16489), in *Palerne* by the peasant boy (312 ff.), by the emperor's daughter (928 ff.), by a youth (1004 ff.), etc., except that in *Palerne* the plur. occurs once in the thanksgiving of the king of Spain (4574 ff.).

In Caius Coll. MS. only the sing. is used in address to God and Jesus. It is used in *Richard* to God by a knight (5029 ff.) and by Richard (6966 ff.), and to Jesus by the author (3). It also occurs in *Ysumbras* in the prayer of a knight (58 ff.) and in *Athelston* where it is used by the king (420 ff.).

Only once in *Infancia* is Jesus addressed as deity (2 ff.), but in *Living* the sing. is addressed to God by the prophet and the recluse (p. 7, etc.), and to Jesus by the author a large number of times in *Dormio* and *Poems of Cambr. Dd.*

In *H. Synne* Robert uses the sing. to the Trinity or the various persons of the Godhead (2 ff., 9783 ff., 11291 ff., etc.). It is also used by a monk to God (255 ff.), by an abbot (1920 ff.), by a leper to Jesus (11461), by the pharisees (11655), etc. In *Medytacyuns* the author usually addresses the sing. to God (3 ff., 531 ff., 867 ff., 1137 ff., etc.); but in one unmistakable case he employs the plur. (579 ff.). The Virgin uses chiefly the plur. to God (457 ff., 463 ff.), but in one speech the sing. (701 ff.). The angel Michael uses both sing. and plur. in the same speech (379 ff., 382 ff.). The sing. is used by St. John to Christ (106), by a man (428 ff.), by soldiers (675 ff.), etc.

In *Ferumbras* only the sing. is used, by Oliver in prayer to Jesus (1153), by the peers in prison to God (1198 ff.), by the amiral's daughter

(2108 ff.), by Richard (3901 ff.), etc. Moreover, in the pieces of the Gawayn MS., with one exception, only the sing. is used. In *Perle* besides two quotations of address to God from the Psalter (594 ff., 677 ff.) the author himself addresses God (1198 ff.). In *Clannesse* God is addressed by Noah (347 ff.), in *Pacience* by Jonah (284 et passim), and in *Gawayn* by the hero (753 ff.). The one exceptional use of the plur. is found in Abraham's wonderful plea for the sparing of Sodom, where he begins to address the Lord with the plur. but soon changes to the sing. (715 ff.). Perhaps even here Abraham speaks rather more to the person in human form before him than to the deity that in his heart he knows him to be.

In the Vernon collection there are, as one would expect, an enormous number of examples of address to the persons of the Trinity. Moreover there is an almost uniform use of the sing. pronoun. The interesting thing about the small but insistent minority of plurals addressed both to the members of the Trinity and to the Holy Virgin is that they seem to represent an abortive tendency to carry the form of respect in the direction of worship.

Of the thousand or more instances where authors address God, Christ or the Holy Ghost it would be scarcely worth while to give examples. They can be found, for instance, on almost every page of the *Poems*. The one case of the plur. which crops out among the singulars occurs in the set of refrain poems:

55:26:29 ff. In heuene þi wille folfuld is,
 And heere in corpe þat hit so be!
 þe Rihtwys weyes þe wolde vs wis,
 Mane nobiscum, domine!

Of the use of the sing. to God by others than the authors examples are the speech of a repentant harlot in *Poems* 29 (3:128 ff.), of a usurer in *Poems* 30 (88), of Alexius in *Alexius* (156 ff.), of a virgin in *Leg. Aurea* 3 (204 ff.), of a monk in *Homilies* (36:90), etc.

One example of the use of a plur. along with singulars by Jesus to God (in *Poems* 38:543 ff.) has already been noted in connection with the address of a child to parents. Another case occurs in *Poems* 55 where a "man" uses both plur. and sing. in his prayer for mercy (13:59 ff.). In *Prop. Sanct.* 19 Martha, protesting to our Lord, uses the plur. (19 ff.). And, finally, in *Homilies* 45, that popular reformed usurer, Pers, complaining to Christ in a dream, uses one plur. form, then, on wakening, the sing. (167 ff.).

The few instances of the plur. addressed to God or Christ are probably due largely to a feeling on the part of the author that there is an

almost human relationship between the speaker and the one addressed. In *H. Synne*, for example, the Virgin addresses God almost as an earthly father, and elsewhere Christ assumes the position of an earthly lord. While this will not account for all the plurals so used, it will help to explain the tendency, quite noticeable in the Vernon MS., to transfer the forms of respect usable toward human superiors to divine hearers.

The few instances of address to non-Christian deities do not offer much ground for conclusions. In *Tars* (*Auch.*) the Saracens reproach Mahoun with sing. pronouns (1197 ff.). The sing. is also used in *Guy* by the soudan who is reproaching his gods because of his defeat (3700 ff.), and by a giant thanking Mahoun, his lord (126:2), in *Beris* by the king to Mahoun (532) and by his daughter (896), and in *Arthour* by a disappointed Saracen king who tells Mahoun he is not "worþ a slo" (7497 ff.).

In the *Story of England* Juno begins to use the plur. to Paris but quickly changes to the sing. (543 ff.), while Venus uses only the sing. to Paris (569 ff.). On the other hand Paris, in addressing the two goddesses, uses only the sing. to Juno (556), but to Venus both sing. and plur. (594 ff.). Perhaps it is fitting to include here also Lear's use of the sing. in addressing Lady Fortune (2449 ff.).

In *Fcrumbras* the Saracens of all ranks use the sing. to Mahoun, their god (1609, 4929 ff., 5123 ff., 5569 ff.).

10. To the Holy Virgin.

Here, again, anyone familiar with the very reverent and chivalrous attitude of the medieval writers toward the Holy Virgin would naturally expect to find traces of this new formal address. And one is not altogether disappointed altho the plur. is not employed in such address as frequently as an *a priori* impression might seem to justify one in expecting.

In the Auchinleck MS. only the sing. is addressed to the Virgin. It is so used in *Miracle* by a clerk (109 ff.), and by the author (189 ff.), in *Guy* by a pilgrim (252:11 ff.), in *Praise* by the author (155 ff.), etc. In *Assumptio* friends *thou* her while she is still on earth (112 ff.).

The sing. is used exclusively, also, in *Homilies* (1169:7 ff., 76:4 ff.), in *Ayenbite* by the author (271:7 ff.), in *Shorcham* by the author (2 et passim), in *Richard* (*Caius*) once only (4475 ff.). In *Infancia* where the Virgin is presented as an earthly character she is *thoued* by her son (115, etc.), and with marked disrespect by Barabas and the Jews (46, 441 ff.). In *Tribulation* the sing. is addressed to the Virgin once by Simeon (p. 757).

In *H. Synne* a man addresses the Virgin with the sing. (735 ff.), but in *Medytacyuns* the author uses both sing. and plur. as follows:

825 A, mary, modyr, þy wo wexyþ newe!
851 ff. Ey, lady! what do þe to knele wepyng
 þus at þese houndes fete, socour sekyng?
 Of salamons sawys þe are not auysed.

St. John also employs the plur. to Mary, who has been left in his care (1012).

The greatest wealth of examples, of course, lies in the Vernon MS. The sing. is used by the various authors with great frequency, particularly in *Poems* 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 38, 55, very often in *Speculum*, less often in *Talking*. There are five cases of the plur. from the author, viz. in *Poems* 28 (103 ff.), in *Poems* 55 (17:17 ff., 18:129 ff., 23:65 ff.), and in Richard Rolle's exquisite *Talking*:

p. 362 A swete ladi . whi ne haue I euere . by-fore myn
 herte eijen.
 5oure þreo serwes : þi sone i-streyht on Roode . etc.

Singulars are used in *Poems* 1 by the angel Gabriel (109 ff.), by a boy in prayer in *Poems* 39 (2:26), in *Theophilus* by a reprobate clerk (401, etc.), in *Robert* by the deposed king (366 ff.), etc.

11. Summary and Conclusions as to Address of Inferiors to Superiors.

At its best the use of the more formal pronoun can only be said to be in its experimental stage. Persons of all ranks naturally use the sing. still and it is only when a speaker—usually one of the higher classes who knows the fashions of the day, linguistic as well as otherwise—desires to make a good impression upon some superior that he employs the plur. The common people do not show any very strong tendency to use the plur. In some instances the presumption is strong that they are not even familiar with the practice. Of course the king commands the plur. from members of the better educated classes most frequently. Occasionally it is used toward persons of special ecclesiastical power or saintliness to show special reverence. It has, apparently, not gained wide enough recognition yet as a mark of respect to make it a part of the code of chivalry toward ladies, altho the fact that in some cases it has already been transferred to the worship of the Holy Virgin would seem to imply that chivalry is beginning to adopt it in England. The very fact that it is addressed to God and used in other places which seem, to say the least, uncalled for, would imply that the new practice of formal address was

either not very well understood or else was not regarded as of much importance. It is a fashion for the fashionable, a sort of tool in the hands of those who have the desire and skill to use it, for shaping certain personal ends such as the appeasement of an angry superior or the gaining of some coveted favor.

II. BETWEEN EQUALS.

12. *Royalty to Royalty.*

In the Auchinleck MS. kings address each other, as a rule, with the sing. In *Otuel* it is used by a Saracen king in a disrespectful speech to King Charles (1225 ff.), in *Arthour* by one king to another (4346), by King Ban coming to the aid of a friendly king (5507, etc.), by Ban to King Arthur (6339), in *Horn C.* between Horn and another king in good will (1102 ff.), in *Richard (Auch.)* by the king of France to King Richard of England (125 ff.), and in *Tristrem* by Mark who angrily addresses another king (3216 ff.). Of course the Saracen king, in *Arthour*, vilifying King Bors in battle, uses the sing. (8998 ff.). But Bors, who has used the sing. before the battle to his comrade, King Arthur, shifts to the plur. when the battle is ended, and is in turn addressed with the plur. by Arthur (9275 ff., 9733 ff.). In *Floris* a soudan, addressing a vassal king, after several cases of the sing. once uses the plur., probably on account of the rime (3532 ff.). In *Arthour* the English king *thous* the Saracen king in a mixture of French and English abuse (6371 ff., 9348 ff.), and two Saracen kings use the sing. to each other as equals (7501 ff.).

In *Kyng Alisaunder* the sing. predominates in speech between kings but several interesting examples of the plur. also occur. The sing. is used by Darius to the king of India (4550 ff.), by one of Alexander's court playing the part of the king to a king who asks for aid (7504 ff.), by a king in league with Darius (2010 ff.), by Alexander to the dead body of his foe, Darius (4654 ff.), and by a king addressing the young Alexander in scorn (871 ff.). But Darius, addressing Alexander peaceably in a letter, uses both sing. and plur. (4506 ff., 4512 ff., 4523 ff., 4634 ff.). A king who is being deceived by a courtier posing as Alexander, uses the sing. to the pseudo-Alexander (7490 ff.), but another king in the same circumstances uses with a single exception the plur. to the one he supposes to be Alexander (7592 ff.). Queen Candace *thous* Alexander, both in a *billet-doux* and later when she meets him (6685 ff., 7684, etc.).

Usage is divided in the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* also. The sing. is used by Tancred to King Richard (152:11 ff.), by Richard to Tancred (153:6 ff.), and to the Greek emperor (167:15 ff.). The king of Jerusalem addresses William with the plur. (141:1). King Philip uses the sing. to Richard (155:14 ff., 177:19 ff.) with the one exception (177:20 ff.). Likewise the Greek emperor, submitting to Richard, uses

the sing. with one exception (163:8 ff., 167:13 ff.). Saladyne's customary use of the sing. to Richard also shows one exceptional plur. (192 ff., 193:17 ff., 194:17 ff., 195:9 ff., 196:13 ff.). Richard uses the sing. scornfully to Philip (156:14 ff.), and later more respectfully the plur. (177:25 ff.).

Much the same is to be said regarding the intercourse of kings in the *Story of England*. The sing. is used by Cassibelaunus to his foe, Julius Caesar (4277 ff.), by Claudius Caesar to the king of Britain (5551 ff.), by the king of Scotland to Arthur (11809 ff.), by King Cadwallo to King Edwyn (15554), etc. King Cadwallo and the king of Britany use both sing. and plur. to each other (15773 ff., 15781 ff., 15785 ff., 16654 ff.).

In *Palerne* the sing. is regularly used in address by monarch to monarch, altho in a few cases where such equality is vicarious or doubtful the plur. may occur as well. For example, one emperor addresses another with the sing. (2122 ff.). However, the captured king of Spain addresses the queen, whose prisoner he is, with the plur. (3994 ff.).

In the pieces of Caius Coll. MS. only the sing. is used between monarchs, with the exception of one pronoun which may well be due to scribal carelessness. It is not easy to decide whether the sing. is so used because the monarchs regard each other as equals or because they are always quarreling. In *Richard (Caius)* the sing. is used, for example, by a royal guest to a king (167), by the German king and Richard to each other (1148 ff.), by a Saracen king to Richard (1713 ff.), by Richard to the French king (4662 ff., 5860 ff.), etc. The French king addresses the sing. to Richard (1777 ff., 3254 ff., 3808 ff.), except in one instance where a plur. verb form occurs:

5855 ff. Kyng Richard, lystenes to me;
Jerusalem, that ryche cytee,
Though thou it wynne it schal be myn.

Richard, of course, *thous* Saladyne (5794 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* a Saracen king in a challenge to Charles uses the sing. (5471 ff.). The use of the pronoun to Balan the amiral by subject kings has already been noticed in Section 1. These kings can scarcely be considered as in any sense equals of the amiral. Charles, in the thick of battle and later, after his victory over the amiral, addresses the latter with the sing. (5619 ff., 5719 ff.). The Saracen kings are *thoued* by the amiral in his various moods (3209 ff., 3304 ff., 3372 ff., 3787 ff., etc.), and by each other (3182 ff.). Once the amiral in asking a king for a report of his expedition uses the sing. and then the plur. (1125 ff.).

The proper pronoun of address between kings is the sing., judging by the preponderance of sing. forms. The occasional use of the plur. can at times be ascribed to the subjection or humiliation of one monarch by the other. But in some cases the introduction of the plur. appears to be due merely to the lack of a fixed usage, or, possibly, to scribal carelessness.

13. *Among Nobles and Knights.*

While it has seemed desirable in the part dealing with the address of inferiors to superiors to attempt a separation of nobles and those who may be termed mere knights, there is really such confusion or uncertainty in the treatment of the two classes by romancers and others—indeed the two are so merged and so apt to overlap in many instances—that it is not worth while to continue the distinction. The knight wandering over the world in search of adventure is recognized by his array and general bearing as one of a well defined upper class of society and addressed as such by the stranger whom he encounters. He may be of the nobility or he may become even one of the most famous kings in later times. As the hero of romance he may be even greater than either. But he is first of all a knight.

The most conspicuous result of bringing together the examples of pronouns addressed to knights in the Auchinleck MS. is that, in spite of the mass of material, there are found to be but a dozen separate cases of the use of the plur. against nine in intercourse among nobles. This is somewhat surprising considering that the nobles have no personal distinction in courage, fame, etc., over the knights; yet the reason of the proportionately greater frequency of plur. forms in the case of nobles becomes clear in view of their being lords of estates, and so being, in a way, indeed under the necessity, of having knights in their service and more or less dependent upon them. In fact two of the best examples of the use of the plur. to knights are in speeches to lords of castles or estates. Of the rest almost nothing can be said in general since they occur under circumstances so different. Almost all are from equals and the motive of respect for a superior which has explained many of the cases heretofore will not serve as well here.

The sing. is used in *Tristrem* by the hero to a duke (838 ff.), in *Guy* by knights in friendly address to dukes (926, 936, 1314, 1921), by knights to dukes in openly hostile situations (1847 ff., 5247 ff., 5658 ff., 6415 ff., etc.), in *Otuel* by Otuel to Roland (115 et passim), in *Amis* by a noble to a leprous knight, his old friend (2131 ff.), between knights (298 ff., 1066 ff.), in *Guy* between knights under a great variety of circumstances

(765 ff., 1361 ff., 1568 ff., 1901 ff., 3041 ff., etc.). In *Guy* sing. and plur. are intermingled in the conversation of two dukes (5183 ff., 5535 ff., 5545 ff., 5860 ff.). A bishop on an embassy to an earl uses both forms (5613 ff.). In *Magdalena* Mary Magdalen addresses the wife of a prince with the plur. (156 ff.⁴⁶) altho later she wrathfully uses the sing. (179 ff.). Only the sing. is used in the address of nobles to knights. In the very numerous examples of speech between knights very few plurals occur. In *Guy* a knight and the stranger of whom he has begged shelter *thou* each other (5999 ff., 6006 ff.) until the latter discovers that his guest is Guy, whose squire he once was. Then he puts in a few plurals (6027 ff., 6040, 6043 ff.). A knight introducing himself to another and soliciting shelter uses the sing. for the most part, but the plur. once (6360 ff.). In *Bevis* the chamberlain, Bonefas, in giving advice to Bevis uses the sing. (2210, 2221 ff.); later when Bevis addresses the plur. to him he uses it in reply (2296 ff., 2340 ff.). In *Lai* knights use the plur. while urging their lord, a rich knight, to marry (213 ff.). And finally in *Horn C.* to a Welsh knight Horn replies with a plur. (642 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* the sing. is used by one earl in addressing another (58:17 ff.), by a duke with friendly intent, to young Harold (69:5 ff.), by Godfroy of Bulloigne to Duke Robert (104:2 ff.), by an earl to a knight (220:21), by a knight to an earl (292:11 ff.), etc. A knight, telling an earl of a fault, uses both sing. and plur. (219:23 ff.) and a noble uses the plur. to another (288:25 ff.).

In the intercourse of nobles and of knights, in the *Story of England*, only two examples of the use of the plur. occur. A bishop, addressing an earl, his brother, uses the plural (8624) and a noble also uses it to Peanda (16254). In the remaining speeches the sing. is used exclusively as, for example, in the speech of Brutus to a noble prisoner (1882 ff.), of a prince aspiring to the crown, to an earl (8323 ff.), of Gawayn to an earl (11594 ff.), etc.

In *Palerne* a knight and a duke in fight *thou* each other (1246 ff.), and a knight uses the sing. to the corpse of his foe (3398). The former werewolf, however, in addressing William, mixes a few plurals among his singulars (4509 ff., 4689 ff., 4726 ff., 5198 ff., etc.). William on first seeing Alphonse after he has been changed back into his natural form addresses him with the plur. (4717 ff.); but thereafter he uses the sing. (4710 ff., 4728 ff., 4743 ff., etc.).

In *H. Synne* the ghost of a knight holds a conversation with a former comrade in which both use the sing. (2245 ff., 2273 ff., 2289 ff., etc.), a young knight uses *thou* with wrath to the knight who has murdered his

⁴⁶ The prince may possibly be included in this plural.

father (3835 ff.), and a knight uses the sing. to his squire (4391 ff.). But a captured knight who has been masquerading as a common man and using the sing. pronoun (10553 ff.), when he confesses his rank shifts to the plur. (10649 ff.). The earl, his captor, continues to employ the sing. even after he learns the real rank of his prisoner (10654 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* the pronouns used in address to Christian nobles by persons of the same faith are, with a single exception, in the sing. Two traitors scorn Oliver's anxious father (335), Roland remonstrates with Naymes (1660), Oliver is told of his father by Roland (2033 ff.), etc. Roland uses the sing. to his cousin Guy, but Guy replies with the plur. (3017 ff., 3031 ff.). The Saracens generally address the sing. to the Christian peers, also, tho, as has been noted in Section 3, *Ferumbras* varies his customary address to his conqueror, Oliver, by the use of two plurals (864 ff.). Since the Saracens are to be regarded as no greater than the peers of Charles we may note here their use of the sing. to the captive Oliver (915 ff.), to an old peer (1578 ff.), to another peer, in challenge (3673 ff.). A Saracen king addressing Naymes uses for the most part the plur. (2207, 2231 ff.), but in one speech both sing. and plur. (2216 ff.).

In *Gawayn* the lord of the castle ordinarily uses the plur. in addressing Gawayn (835 ff., 1069 ff., 1093 ff., etc.). There are, however, two occasions on which the Green Knight uses the sing., one rather early in Gawayn's visit, the other much later. The first seems to have no significance (1068 ff.), but the second is clearly a mark of affection (1674 ff.). At the court of Arthur he has always used the sing. to Gawayn (379 ff., 406 ff., etc.). Also in the final scene he brusquely uses the sing. to the hero (2217 ff., 2239 ff., 2370 ff., etc.). Yet in one or two speeches even here he shifts to the plur. (2366 ff., 2404 ff.). At Arthur's court Gawayn uses only the sing. to the Green Knight (381 ff., 398 ff.). When he again meets the knight he naturally employs the sing. (2238, 2251, 2300, etc.), altho one plur. slips in (2324 ff.). After he discovers that his host is the Green Knight and also his uncle he uses only the plur. (2385 ff., 2409 ff., 2429, etc.). Gawayn's friends at the court of Arthur address him always with the sing. (674 ff.).

Among the few examples of speech between nobles or knights the sing. predominates, in the Vernon MS. It is used in *Gregorius* by an earl and his sister to a knight (110), who replies with the sing. except for one rather uncertain plur. (123 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea 2* a knight is *thoued* by Ambrosius (978 ff.). The sing. is used, also, by St. Bernard, in *Leg. Aurea 5*, to his brother, a knight (214 ff.), in *Homilies 10* by a bishop to a rich knight (23, etc.), in *Homilies 38* by two knights in a

feud (35 ff.). In *Joseph* one knight uses the plur. to another who comes to his aid (586).

It would almost seem from the examples considered above that the members of the knightly class are beginning to adopt the plur. pronoun of address in dealing with those whom they regard as social equals as a mark of culture, as showing that the speaker knows what is good form under the circumstances rather than as a sign of subserviency or respect as assumed in the relationships heretofore studied. There are, it is true, some cases still where the speaker manifestly desires to curry favor or show respect for some one of his class whom circumstances have made his superior. But these cases are not quite so pronounced.

14. Ladies to Knights.

Since our study of the pronoun used in address to ladies has failed to show any convincing evidence that address to a lady was marked by any special formality or respect we shall be justified in treating the address of ladies to members of the knightly class as the speech of equals to equals.

Among numerous examples in the Auchinleck MS. only one shows the use of the plur. to a knight, namely, in *Arthour* where Guinevere mixes sing. and plur. in addressing the unknown knight, Arthur, who is her father's guest:

6545 ff. & sche seyd to him: Sir, gramerci,
It nis nouȝt to ȝeld, sir, ie vus dy,
Ac swiche a þouand, so y be,
Sir, no miȝt it ȝeld þe,
þe help & þe trauail & þe honour,
þat ȝe han don to mi lord, & ȝour socour:
Yherd be iesus Cristes sond,
þat ȝou sent in to þis lond!

The sing. is used to knights by a queen and by the saint in *Katerine* (301 ff., 344 ff.), in *S. S.* by the widow of Ephesus (2663 ff.), in *Guy* to the hero by a maid whose father Guy is serving (3189 ff.), in *Horn C.* to Horn's friend and to Horn himself by a princess (349 ff., 746 ff.), in *Bevis* by a lady (289), etc.

In the romance of *Palerne* aside from the speeches of Melior to William, which will be taken up later under the head of "speech between lovers", few examples can be cited. Perhaps it might be well to note in passing that the queen, in a hind's skin, to William similarly disguised, uses both sing. and plur. (3139 ff., 3213 ff., 3656 ff., 3960 ff., etc.). The wicked Spanish queen uses only the sing. to William (4406 ff.). The

queen of Palerne uses the plur. to Prince Alphonse (8070), as do also the two wicked ladies to William (4786 ff.).

Perhaps not much stress can be laid upon the one example in *H. Synne* in the dream of the squire where he hears his lady address him with the sing. (3257 ff., 3299 ff.), altho the sing. might be a part of the gracious favor which he would desire.

In *Ferumbras* the amiral's daughter, Floripas, on first acquaintance thous Oliver (1281 ff., 1384 ff., 1402 ff.).⁴⁷ After she has started in to make the acquaintance of the peers, by asking their names, etc., she continues to address them all with the sing. (2049 ff.,⁴⁷ 2058 ff.,⁴⁸ 2063 ff., etc.). At the last, however, when she inquires for Guy of whom she has previously been fond she uses a plur. verb, and other plurals somewhat later (2188 ff., 2193, 7072). In another place she mixes sing. and plur. in addressing Roland (3447 ff.), and in a last instance she uses only the plur. (3799, 3805).

In *Gawayn* the lady of the castle while testing Gawayn with pretended amorousness uses the plur. (1209, etc., 1481, etc., 1508, 1779, 1815, etc.). At three separate times, however, she shifts to the sing. and it is evidently a familiarity proper to her rôle as temptress (1484 ff., 1746 ff., 1798 ff.).

The later examples are more or less significant but the earlier ones show about the same indifference in the use of the pronoun, or confusion, as in the address between the classes already considered.

15. *Husband and Wife.*

At the beginning of the period under consideration the evidence furnished by the Auchinleck MS. seems to prove that the husband would always address his wife with the sing. pronoun, and the wife would do likewise in a comparatively large number of instances. Still there are examples of the use of the plur. by the wife to the husband in all classes of society from the empress to the wife of the rich burgess. With respect to the lower classes of society this MS. gives only cases of the use of the sing. Where the plur. is used by a wife it is not consistent, except in one brief speech of a wife to a prince; and this shifting, moreover, cannot ordinarily be explained with ease.

In *Katerine* the emperor and empress *thou* each other in a dispute about Christianity (509-533). In *S. S.* the emperor addresses his young wife with the sing. in all his moods but she occasionally addresses a plur. to him (273 ff., 297, 487 ff., 532, 1661 ff., 1963 ff., 1967 ff., 2327 ff.,

⁴⁷ The French *Fierabras* has the plur. in the corresponding passages.

⁴⁸ In *Fierabras* the princess shifts from plur. to sing. in this speech.

2343 ff., etc.). In *Bevis*, on the other hand, the mother of the hero addresses her second husband, the emperor, with the plur. regularly, and the sing. occurs only as an oversight (3313 ff.). In *Tars* the sing. is used once by the king to the queen (259). It is used, also, in *Arthour*, by King Uther and his queen (2675-80), and in *Tristrem* by Mark and Isolt (1075-80, 2003-10). In *Orphco* the king tenderly addresses his unfortunate wife with the sing. and she replies with the same form with one exception (100-114, 121 ff., 129 ff.). In *Tars* the soudan and his Christian wife *thou* each other except for one plur. used by the latter (467, 480, 672 ff., etc.). In *Magdalena* a prince uses the sing. to his wife (195, 252-263), and she addresses him only with the plur. (244-9, 462). The sing. is used in *Amis* by a duke and his lady both (2151 ff., 2382 ff.), in *Bevis* by an earl and his wife (189, 197), and by another earl and his wife (3196 ff., 3211). In both these there may be a lack of respect due to the fact that both are planning to kill their husbands. Between knights and their ladies only the sing. is used, namely, in *Amis* by a lady and her supposed husband (1168 ff., 1175 ff.), in *S. S.* by the royal steward and his lady (1597-1610), in *Guy* by the hero and Felice (23:7 ff.), in *Tristrem* to the hero by Isolt of the White Hands (2703 ff.), etc. There is one exception to the last group in the angry speech of a lady, in *S. S.*, who is blaming her husband (807 ff.). The sing. is used in *S. S.* by both the unlucky husband and his wife (1486 ff.), and by the masterful old husband and his wife (1905 ff.), as also by the wife in the magpie tale (2267 ff.). In *Penicworþ*, while the rich merchant addresses only the sing. to his wife (37 ff., 257 ff., 387 ff.), she shifts from one form to the other (44 ff., 251 ff., 263 ff., 271 ff.). And, finally, in *De Creat.* Adam and Eve use the sing. altogether (63, etc.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* the only example of speech between husband and wife is that of the queen to King Cnute where the plur. is used (49:22).

In the *Story of England* there are but two cases of address between husband and wife. Goneril uses the plur. to the duke (2407 ff.), and Uther and Igerne use the sing. mutually (9533 ff.).

In *Palerne* the queen addresses the sing. to the emperor (5149 ff.). It is interesting to note in this connection that the emperor uses the sing. to the king, his brother-in-law, except for one plural (5421 ff.). The king in reply uses the sing. (5432 ff.).

The pieces of the Caius Coll. MS. show a divided practice. In *Richard* the king of Germany uses the sing. to his wife (819 ff.). A knight, in *Ysumbras*, uses the plur. to his wife (190 ff.⁴⁹). Another

⁴⁹ It is barely possible that the son may be included in this plur. altho only the wife is directly mentioned. All MSS. agree as to the pronoun.

knight is addressed by his wife with both sing. and plur. (343 ff.). In *Athelston* the sing. is used by King Arthur and his queen (261 ff.).

The use of the sing. in the speech of the wife of the dyer to her husband, in *Infancia* (605), adds another bit of evidence regarding the practice among the lower classes.

In *H. Synne*, while the ghost addresses his wife of former days with the sing. (10407 ff., 10462 ff.), she replies respectfully with the plur. (10423 ff., 10463 ff.). Belshazzar's queen also uses the plur. to him (9400 ff.).

The two examples in the Gawayn MS. show a rather characteristic contrast. Abraham, directing Sarah as to the cooking, uses the sing., in *Clannesse* (925 ff.), but in *Gawayn* Arthur addresses the plur. to his queen (470).

The examples of the use of the pronoun between husband and wife in the Vernon MS. go to show that the man always uses the sing. to his wife, but that the wife not infrequently uses the plur. to her husband. While, as noted above, social rank is somewhat doubtful in this enormous collection of religious pieces we may reasonably suppose that the generality just stated holds irrespective of class. In *Poems 31* the ghost of the husband uses the sing. to the widow's plur. (515, etc.), but in *Spir. Guy.* ghost and widow both use the sing. (p. 321 ff.). The sing. is used, also, in *Gregorius* by a knight to his lady (155 ff.) and between the earl and his countess (531 ff.), in *Tars (Vernon)* by a king to his wife (253), in *Swete S.* by Susanna to Joachim (250 ff.), and in *Creatio* between Adam and Eve (223 ff.). While the soudan, in *Tars (Vernon)*, always employs the sing. to his Christian wife (440 et passim), the latter shifts from one form to the other with no apparent reason (453 ff., 565 ff., 668 ff., 766 ff.).

565 ff. Tak hit vp wel sone a-non
And to ȝor temple þer wiþ ȝe gon,
And loke, ȝe lette hit nouht;
And preye þi goddes alle ifeere,
As þow art hem boþe lef and dere, . . .

It cannot be regarded as mere accident that in all the material under consideration only two or three instances occur of the use of the plur. by a husband to a wife while the wife is so frequently observed shifting from one form to the other or using altogether the plur. This not only shows an increasing feeling for the plur. as a form of respect but it is an interesting commentary upon the position of the wife in the medieval social system.

16. *Lovers.*

In the Auchinleck MS. lovers address only the sing. to each other. The examples are all from the higher classes and altho they are very numerous they do not occur in any variety of situations. In *Amis* the daughter of a duke and the reluctant knight to whom she offers her affections use the sing. to each other (571 et passim). In *Guy* the young hero and the earl's daughter use the sing. only (1117 et passim). A duke addresses the "leman" of his foe, whom he intends to marry willy nilly, with the sing. (5907, etc.), and she, pretending to comply, replies in a similar manner (15925, etc.). A wounded knight is also *thoued* by his beloved (4884 ff.). In *Bevis* the hero and the Saracen princess use the sing. to each other under all circumstances and thruout the poem (713 ff., 1093 ff., 1465 ff., 2106, etc.). The sing. is used in *Lai* by a knight in deceiving the reputed niece of the abbess (287 ff.), in *Tristrem* by a princess and her foreign lover (135 ff.), and in *Horn C.* by Horn and Rimmild (381, etc.).

Of course, in *Ayenbite*, the lover in the Song of Songs addresses the maiden with the sing. as do all the Biblical characters introduced (94:27 ff.).

In the *Story of England* Paris *thous* Helen (693 ff.).

The pronoun used in *Palerne* by Melior to William varies according to circumstances. She uses the sing. in a dream that William has of her (664 ff.⁵⁰), the sing. in offering her love to him (876), and upon visiting him when he is sick (1532 ff.⁵¹), the plur. when they plight their love (1561 ff.⁵²), the sing. in planning escape with him (1652 ff.⁵²), the plur. in coquettish fright at seeing him in his bear's skin (1742 ff.⁵²), both sing. and plur. when they are in danger (2358 ff.⁵²), the plur. as they doff their skins of disguise (2419 ff.), the sing. as they escape the barge-boy (2793), the plur. when she tells him of her joy at seeing him without the disguise (3082 ff.), etc. It would be rather difficult, to say the least, to account psychologically for these various changes; they demonstrate one fact quite clearly, namely, that under the circumstances either form was correct. William, on the other hand, in his address to his beloved uses the sing. thruout with two exceptions, one an isolated *þe* (2314 ff.), the other along with singulars as follows:

2338 ff. for meliors, my dere hert . be marie in heuene,
holly al þis harde . þow hast al for my gelt;
þer-fore, gif godes wille were . i wold haue al þe payne,
to mede þe were fro þis quarrere . quitly a-schaped.
& dere hert, deliuerli . do as ich þe rede, etc.

⁵⁰ Sing. also in *Guillaume de Palerne*.

⁵¹ Sing. and plur. in *G. de P.*

⁵² Plur. in *G. de P.*

For his use of the sing. see: 1541 ff., 1646 ff., 1655 ff., 1740 ff., etc.

In *Richard (Caius)* King Henry uses the sing. in proposing marriage to a princess (172 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* the lovers, Guy and Floripas, address each other with the sing. exclusively (2450 ff., 2796, 3081 ff., 5195 ff.)⁵³

Were it not for the rather frequent occurrences of the plur. in *Palerne* in the speeches of Melior to William the evidence would justify the assumption that the intimacy of lovers called for the sing. form of the pronoun in addressing each other. Perhaps the exceptional usage of *Palerne* can be set aside as due largely to the influence of the plur. as it is used in the Old French version of the story. At any rate the sing. is the prevailing form between lovers.

17. *Brothers and Sisters.*

The pronoun used by a brother or sister to a brother or sister is the result oftentimes of conditions which tend to exalt one above the other and not always of mere brotherly or sisterly feeling. And so the examples which can be placed under this head must be considered in the light of any possible laws which may have been detected in the study of certain classes of society already noted. A knight, for example, may not use the same form to his bishop brother or a noble brother that he would to one of his own rank. And yet, with this kept in mind, it may be possible to draw some very general conclusions regarding their intercourse.

In the Auchinleck MS. the sing. is used in all cases except once between brothers-in-law (*Tristrem*, 2918). In *Guy* a duke *thous* his younger sister (2274 ff.). In *Arthour* the sing. is used by King Uther to his brother (2630 ff.) and by Sir Kay and young Arthur (2877 ff.). Likewise a young warrior is addressed by his brothers with the sing. (5053 ff.). In *Tristrem* Isolt of the White Hands and her brother *thou* each other (2874 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* the sister of King Richard uses the sing. to him (152:25). Also, Richard, reproving and forgiving John, uses the sing. (201:25 ff.).

In the *Story of England* Elidur uses the sing. to Arthgallo (3887 ff.), and Brian and his sister *thou* each other (15855 ff.). Perhaps the passages might be cited here, also, where Arthur and his cousin, the king of Brittany, address each other. Arthur uses the sing. (9889 ff., 10307) and the cousin begins with the plur. but shifts to the sing. (11751 ff.).

In *Athelston* the king and his brother use the sing. in addressing each other (97 ff.); the king is reproachfully addressed by his sister with the

⁵³ Plur. in O. F. *Fierabras*.

plur. (245 ff.). The archbishop, altho he regularly uses the sing. to the king, introduces a plur. once (430 ff., 450 ff., 468, etc.).

In *H. Synne* the sing. is used by St. Jerome to his sister (7707 ff.).

In *Ferumbras* the amiral *thous* a king, his brother (5459 ff.), and Ferumbras addresses the sing. to his sister (5823 ff.).

Several cases of the conversation of brothers and sisters occur in the Vernon MS. The sing. is used by an earl, in *Gregorius*, to his sister (82 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea 2* by St. Ambrose to his sister (199 ff.), in *Barlaam* by a king to his brother (363 ff.), in *Homilies 16* by the son of a knight to his brother (730), in *Homilies 28* by a king to his brother (27 ff.), in *Homilies 41* by a ghost to her sister (67 ff.), in *Joseph* by a king and his brother-in-law (485, etc.), etc. In *Leg. Aurea 5* a monk addresses the sing. to his little brother (274 ff.), and to his sister (532 ff.); but the little brother replies with the plur. (279 ff.).

It would seem that brothers and sisters use the more familiar sing. to each other unless the superior social standing commands a special respect, as, for example, in the speech of a brother or sister to a royal brother.

18. *Equals of the Middle and Lower Classes.*

The examples of the use of the pronoun by persons of the middle and lower classes in the Auchinleck MS. are not many nor are they especially interesting. In all but one instance the sing. is used. Apparently it still prevails in the speech of the common man. In *S. S.* it is used by a gardener to a burgess (614), and by the burgess in return (580 ff.), in *Peniworþ* between a wise old man and a rich merchant (87, 117, etc.), to the same merchant by his mistress (323, etc.) and by her maid (197 ff.), to a whore by her maid (181 ff.), in *Tristrem* by Isolt to Tristrem disguised as a merchant (1557), in *Amis* by a squire and his master, the duke, to a leper (2020 ff., 2077 ff.), in *Lai* by an abbess to her porter (214 ff.), in *Arthour* by a hermit to a maid (803 ff.), and by a justice to a young woman (895 ff.), in *Simonie* by a physician to a woman of unstated position (216 ff.), etc. Only once, in *Arthour*, a plur. is addressed by a hermit to a justice (960).

In *Homilies* in the few examples of address to people of the middle rank only the sing. occurs. It is used by St. John remonstrating with a youth fallen into evil ways (114:23 ff.), by a goodman telling the mother of St. Thomas of the son to be born of her (124:23), by a bishop prescribing penance for a usurer (139:21 ff.), and between the usurer and a beggar (140:3 ff.).

In address to a few persons of low or uncertain rank, in the *Story of*

England, the sing. only is used. A child, addressing his companion, Merlin, uses it (8003 ff.). A king uses the sing. to Merlin's mother (8039 ff.), and also to Merlin (8097 ff., 8790 ff.). Likewise Uther uses the sing. to Merlin (9392 ff.). An heir to the throne uses the sing. to a Saxon (8996 ff.), a knight to an old woman (13251 ff.), and the Romans to any one of the Britons (12681 ff.).

In *Palerne* only the sing. is used in the few instances where persons of high or low rank address the lower classes. The emperor uses it in speaking to the peasant boy, William (248 ff., 322 ff.). He also uses it in a not unkindly speech to the cowherd (275 ff.). A workman and a collier use it to their fellows (2256, 2546 ff.).

In *Richard* a minstrel addresses the sing. to a royal porter (680 ff.). The Saracens, hailing a sailor on an English ship, use it also (2492 ff.). In all other cases of address to persons of lower rank the sing. pronoun is used by royalty, namely, by the prince and princess of Germany to a jailor, in *Richard* (754, 886 ff.), by King Richard to the porter of his prison (1041 ff.), and to a mayor in a foreign country (1506 ff.), and a cook (3181 ff.). In *Ysumbras* a soudan uses the sing. to a poor but attractive Christian man (259 ff.). And curiously enough the only examples of the use of the plur. to persons of the middle class are in the speeches of Richard to "a noble clerk" in *Richard* (1173 ff.) and to a sailor, probably a naval commander (2509 ff.).

While no example of the plur. occurs in *Infancia* to lend interest to the matter and the characters are somewhat removed from the class under present consideration because of the religious character of the piece, perhaps, for the sake of completeness we may include the speeches of the two masters to their apprentice, Jesus (613 ff., 648 ff.), and of Jesus and Judas as children together (139 ff., 175 ff.).

In *H. Synne*, with one exception the pronouns used to the persons outside the chivalric group are those of the sing. On the whole, however, the examples are not such as to warrant any hard and fast conclusions as to what Robert of Brunne had or had not heard in the classes here included. A bishop addresses the famous witch who had the prototype of modern milking machines (519 ff.). The devil, unexpectedly coming at call, uses the sing. to a woman (1272). A usurer is *thoued* by a poor man, by angels, and by God, after his reform (5609 ff., 5670 ff., 5731 ff.).⁵⁴ A usurer and his clerk *thou* each other (5749 ff., 5791 ff.). The sing. is used by a rich man to his steward, a bondsman (5853 ff.⁵⁴), and friends use the sing. to the rich man (5891 ff.). In a hypothetical remonstrance from an executor to a testator the sing. is used

⁵⁴ In the corresponding passages of the *Manuel des Pechiez* the plur. is used.

with great frequency (6437 ff.), by the devil to a friendly clerk (8214 ff.⁵⁴), by a priest rebuking a midwife (9641 ff.), etc. The only case of the plur. is the rather surprising use of it by St. John of Constantinople to his servant:

6885 ff. þarfore 3yueþ with gode wyl
And curteysye, with-outyn yl.

Perhaps this cannot be stressed as much as if the pronoun were present also.

In *Ferumbras*, in the handful of examples of address to persons of lower standing than the peers, whether Christian or Saracen, only the sing. occurs. It is used by both the amiral and his daughter to the jailor (1184 ff., 1226 ff.), by the amiral's daughter to her maid (1372 ff.), by the amiral to a professional thief whom he is employing (2387 ff.), to an engineer (3247 ff.), etc. A messenger and a giant bridgeward *thou* each other in mutual dislike (3869 ff.). The bridgeward and the rich merchant (Richard in disguise) also *thou* each other (4451 ff., 4503 ff.). A peer addressing a merchant as "gode man" uses the sing. (1729 ff.), and a peer threatening a Saracen burglar also uses the same form (2444.)

In the *Perle* the sing. is used by a lord to his reeve (541 ff.), and between the laborer and his lord (555 ff.). In *Clannesse* the lord of the marriage feast *thous* a guest (139 ff.), but the servants in addressing the lord use both sing. and plur. (94 ff.). The three celestial men visiting Abraham address him with the sing. (621 ff.) and he replies likewise (613 ff.). The men of Sodom use the sing. to Lot (875 ff.), and the two messengers sent to warn him commonly use it (899 ff., 919 ff.), altho they also use the plur. in two passages intermingled with the sing. (901 ff., 929 ff.). In *Pacience* the seamen use the sing. in addressing Jonah (196 ff.).

And finally, in the Vernon MS., numerous cases can be found of address to persons below the knightly class. These persons range from rich merchants to servants and beggars, and include many who are simply Christian men or Jews. The pronoun of address is normally the sing.; only five examples of the use of the plur. occur. In the *Dispute between a Good Man and the Devil*, *Poems* 36, Satan's emissary invariably uses the sing. (35 et passim). The good man also uses it until he begins to grow suspicious of the stranger, then he shifts to the plur. temporarily (37 ff., 406 ff., 956 ff., 998 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea* 4 the sing. is used to a man of position by an angel (131 ff.), and by an abbot (371 ff.). But the man's daughter in monk's weeds uses the plur. to him (154 ff.). In *Homilies* 45 Pers, the rich man, is addressed by a clerk with the plur.

verb (199 ff.). The other two examples of the plur., addressed respectively to Savina, in *Leg. Aurea* 7 (207 ff.), and to Susanna, in *Susan* (135 ff.), have been discussed, along with a number of singulars, as a phase of address to ladies, in Section 5.

The sing. is used, for example, in *Poems* 29 by a merchant and a Jewish usurer (6:24, etc.), in *Gregorius* by a clerk to a fisher (672 ff.), in *Leg. Aurea* 4 by Ambrosius to two men (367 ff., 382 ff.), in *Barlaam* by a knight to a poor man (134 ff.), in *Homilies* 31 by a monk to a young man (6), etc.

While some of the examples should more properly be left to the portion of our study which deals with the address of superiors to inferiors they have nevertheless been given here for the sake of showing more fully the attitude of society in general toward the middle and lower classes. The very consistent use of the sing. by people of these classes shows quite conclusively that the burgesses and other persons of a standing below the courtly class have not, even as late as the time of the Vernon MS., begun to ape their superiors to any extent at all in the matter of formal address. The few plurals can be explained very largely as due to the unconscious use by one of knightly rank of the form of address which he has, perhaps, been accustomed to use to those about him or else to the fact that the speaker recognizes a superiority in the one addressed due to greater wealth or power or social influence.

19. *Author to Reader.*

It is, of course, impossible to decide in most instances whether an author uses the plur. as a mark of respect to his reader or with the intention of including many in his audience. And yet, aside from the question of formal or informal address, there are some interesting questions involved in the subject which make it worth while to examine somewhat into the attitude of the author toward those for whom he professes to be writing.

In the Auchinleck MS. there are cases of the use of the pronoun by the author to the reader in *Harrowing* (42), in *Assumptio* (26 ff.), in *Guy* (186:10 ff.), all in the sing. The plur. is used, also, very commonly in *Arthur* (3079), in *Bernard* (19, etc.), in *Horn C.*, etc., as well as in the pieces first named.

In *Homilies* the examples of the plur. (9:2, 14:13, et passim) are much more numerous than those of the sing. (137:7 ff.). In one instance, for the sake of the rime, the two are brought absurdly close together:

138:13 ff. The mar thou drinkes of the se,
The mare and mar threstes ye;

In *Ayenbite* a large number of the examples in which a reader or hearer is addressed are in quotations from various sources, proverbial expressions, etc. Among the speakers are Seneca (85:24 ff.), Jesus (133:29), St. Paul (145:29 ff.), Solomon (156:15, 184:6, 252:26, etc.), Boethius (174:28 ff.), St. Bernard (203:2), St. Jerome (206:31 ff.), etc. Moreover the author himself addresses the reader with great frequency.

In *Kyng Alisaunder* the author addresses the reader with the sing. (127 et passim) and also with the plur., the latter referring, of course, to more than one person.

In the poems of William of Shoreham the author always uses the sing.

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* the only cases that might come under this head are the use of the sing. by the author to Wales and to Scotland (265:3 ff.) and to Edward (289 ff.).

In *Palerne* the author uses both sing. and plur. in addressing his reader or readers, the sing. being more common, perhaps because of his weakness for the phrase *wittow forsope*. Once there is an example of the use of the objective case instead of the nominative:

4550. Gret murrþe at þat metyng . was mad, be þou sure.

In *Alquin* we have already noticed (in Section 3) the tendency of the writer to forget that the entire discussion is supposed to be addressed to an earl, and the consequent shifting from the sing., which is quite common at first, to the plur., in which the author very plainly comprehends all possible readers.

In the poems of MS. Cambr. Dd only the sing. is used and it is almost always addressed to some imaginary reader or hearer. In *Poems* Jesus speaks to man in general. In *Dormio* and in *Poems* there are a large number of examples of address from the author to Jesus, while the author speaks to the reader frequently in *Living*, *Dormio*, *Love* and *Poems*. The reader of *Living* is in reality the individual usually named in the MSS. as Margaret, an anchoress.

If the order hitherto preserved may once be disregarded, it will be convenient to dismiss the usage in *Medytacyuns* with the single statement that only the sing. is used to the reader (220 et passim).⁵⁵ Turn-

⁵⁵ This fact is carelessly cited by the editor of the text (p. xi) as an illustration of the sing. of equality, capital being made of the absence of the plur. All that this really proves is that *Meditacyuns* was for private reading and not for recital to an audience. But cf. the note by Zupitza to *Guy* (xvth century), line 5478.

ing to *H. Synne* we may further clear the way slightly by noting first that the address is sometimes to definite classes; e. g. to the Christian man (9 et passim), to a lording (2195, etc.), to a traitor (4191 ff.)⁵⁶, to a steward (5489 ff.), to a bailiff (5497 ff.), to a rich man (6105 ff.), to an executor of a will (6243 ff.), to a "leud" man (7413 ff.), to a priest (7899 ff.). Such references will clearly indicate the highly personal nature of the exhortation of *H. Synne*. At the same time they will illustrate what is absolutely indisputable in the poem, that whether the plur. is addressed to an individual or no, at least such a plur. is not occasioned by rank. We may also eliminate from the mass of material certain cases of the pronoun which are quoted from others; e. g., from Seneca (1181 ff.), from Solomon (4182),⁵⁷ from the gospel (5128), from David (5158 and 6583 ff.), from Cato (7195 ff.), and from Isaiah (10964), from St. Augustine (12461 ff.).⁵⁷

Robert of Brunne in *H. Synne* uses the sing. and the plur. pronoun with great, and something like equal, frequency. The distinction between the two forms will be clear to anyone looking over a few pages of the text,—that the plur. is used in general address to the reader as in the beginning or concluding of a tale, or in reference to a tale previously told, etc.; and that the sing. is used in direct appeal to the conscience of the reader and in hortatory passages. Such a fact as this can scarcely be proved by references, but it can be well illustrated by a passage which contains both forms: ⁵⁸

7115 ff. Charyte ys, þe longyng of loue,
As y haue tolde þow here aboue;
For alle þat euer þou mayst do,—
But loue yn charyte be þerto—

It may also serve to establish the fact if from perhaps a score of conspicuous exceptions one be given of a sing. where the plur. would be expected and one of the converse. The first occurs in a tale:

5693 ff. And reuful of herte also he was,
þat mayst þou here lere yn þys pas.

6895 ff. Also hyt ys grete curtesye
To ȝyue ȝoure almes hastylye; ⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The sing. is likewise used in *Manuel* (4059). Since, then, the sing. occurs, it may well be that some of the plur. forms in the Anglo-Norman are addressed to individuals. It is much to be regretted that so essential a point must be given up as impossible to decide.

⁵⁷ Both plur. in *Manuel*.

⁵⁸ Another capital case is in 2376 ff. Other only less clear cases occur in ll. 678-687, 1237-1251, 2457-2467, et passim.

⁵⁹ Sing. in *Manuel*.

In the nature of the case, and especially after the observance of the circumstances of the use of the plur., there can be no reasonable doubt that in general such forms are addressed to readers and not to an individual reader, and the occasional occurrence of plural nouns⁶⁰ helps to make it clear that such is the case.⁶¹

However, in view of the general use of the plur. in the original, and likewise of the strong tendency of this MS. to have the plur. in unusual places, there might be supposed to be a likelihood of plurals being addressed to an individual reader. In view of these two principles and the individual circumstances of the case one might be led to question a good many of the examples of the plur. It is needless to say that nothing could be decided. Still it is worth while to give the three likeliest cases—so far as personal judgment can determine:

3735 ff. 5yf þy wrapþe þou wylt not blynne,
But bryngest anoþer to þy synne,
þou shalt haue charge of þo boþe,
For þurgh þoure wrapþe are oþer wroþe;

⁶⁰ Cf. 1285 ff., 765 ff., 56 ff., 10791 ff.

⁶¹ It may seem that the appeal should be to the original, but such an appeal is fruitless. However, the relation of the English to the Anglo-Norman cannot be left without some explanation. First cases of the sing. addressed to the reader in *Manuel* are almost lacking. An example cited in a previous note (2497 ff. and 10255 ff.) do not permit one to say quite lacking. Most of the plurals in *Manuel* are converted into singulars in literally hundreds of cases. In a few they are represented by the plur. in the English. The following parallel lines have a closer relationship than is usual, and at the same time show that nothing is to be gained from the comparison:

8271 ff. Pys tale y tolde to 3ow aboute,
Pat je ne dur no wycchecrafte doute,
Pyf þou be . . .

6457 ff. Ceo uns ai cunté pur prouer,
Qe bon creistien ne deit durer. . . .

As a matter of fact, however, by far the larger number of cases of the plur. in *H. Synne* have no corresponding forms in the Anglo-Norman. The same is true of the sing. in *H. Synne*. In the latter case the chances are that the original had expressed the thought indirectly, in the third person. Such a change from indirect discourse is indeed not confined to the address to the reader, but is common everywhere, and accounts for the surprising lack of references to *Manuel* on the preceding pages. Altho this change does not elucidate the present problem, it is a striking illustration of Robert of Brunne's direct and personal appeal to his readers, which, apart from the racy stories, would have made *H. Synne* one of the great books of the xivth century. The preference for direct quotations may also be thought to reflect the dramatic instinct of the English people.

- 3739 ff. For þy defaute þan synneþ he,
þe more *perel* þyn shal be.⁶²
- 4521 ff. þarefore seyþ þe kyng Salamon
Beþ nat ydul, neuer none,⁶³
- 4664 ff. y forsake þe, here, Satan,
And alle þy pompes and all thy werkys:
þys ys þy lore, aftyr þe clerkys.
haldyst þou forward, e, certys nay,
whan þou makyst swyche a-dray?
Aþens God þou brekest *cunnaunt*,
And seruyst þoure syre, *Termagaunt*.⁶⁴

Thus in the large list of examples of address to the reader which *H. Synne* contains there is no fully trustworthy example of a plur. pronoun addressed to an individual reader.⁶⁵

⁶² Apparently an inadvertent following of *Manuel*:

3741 ff. Si *vus unques*, quant futes irez,
Autre home feissez corucez,
Fet auez dunc dous mals;

⁶³ The impersonal structure in *Manuel* would indicate that this is sing.

4217 ff. Pur ceo, dist Salomon
Cesser de bien fere, deit nul hom;

⁶⁴ And yet in *Manuel* this whole passage is in the third person plur. (4323 ff.).

⁶⁵ That an error has been made in the following four very important examples is clear from the fact that the verbs demand *þou* instead of *you*; but the blunder must be attributed to the scribe. It is not exaggeration to say that these four cases constitute a chapter in the history of the substitution of the plur. for the sing. in the second person of the pronoun, or more especially in the history of the victory of the oblique over the nominative case of the plur.

153 ff. The fyrst askyng ys yn oure boke,
þyf þou *euer* god forsoke;
Any tyme, as for nede,
Or for folye, or for drede,
Or ouþer chaunce þat you weyl woste.

351 ff. þyf you yn swerd, oþer yn bacyn,
Any chylde madyst loke þeryn,
Or yn þumbe, or yn cristal,— . . .

(The plur. in *Manuel* 1092 ff. has no bearing on the above passage.)

427 ff. þat you wakyng [sumtyme] þenkes,
Before þy yȝen hyt blenkys.

(Perhaps, however, the scribe took *þenkes* as impersonal and *you* as its object.)

3015 ff. Or þyf þou speke foule wrdys or rowe,
And to þy souereyn wylt þat bowe,
þyf þy prout wurdys make hym wroth,
Be þou neuer so lefe no loth, . . .

(For *speke* in the first line Bodl. 415 reads *spekst*. In *Manuel* 3173 the plur. is used.)

In the Vernon MS. there are no examples of the use of the plur. by the author, but the sing. occurs with considerable frequency thruout the *Poems*, in *Gregorius*, in *Leg. Aurea*, in *Euphros.*, in *Prop. Sanct.*, in *Robert*, in the *Yorkshire Pieces*, very often in *Stacions*, and in *Joseph*.

It is evident from the examples given above that in the relation of author to reader or readers we cannot hope to find much really conclusive evidence of the use of the more formal plur. of respect. In most cases it is only possible to assume that the author conceives of himself, sometimes as advising or addressing one person, then again as speaking to many. Moreover, as has been hinted, the use of certain set phrases and modes of speech seems at times to influence the author's choice of pronoun.

20. *Summary and Conclusions as to Address of Equals.*

Among equals the sing. is still the usual form of address. The conclusions of the first chapter would lead one to expect that. For just as the majority of plurals used by inferiors to superiors were found to be due to a desire to show marked respect or else to a confusion or carelessness in the matter of polite usage, so in the intercourse of those who may be roughly classed as social equals the occurrences of the plur. are largely due to a feeling on the part of the speaker that the one addressed is in reality his superior, if not technically, at least financially or in the power or social influence that he possesses. Other cases seem to show a lack of care in the use of the new form of address which would argue either that people of the better classes did not lay any great stress on the new usage or that the author was accustomed to hearing the two forms intermingled more or less indiscriminately, or both. As we have said at the very outset, any attempt to classify all the persons of the heterogeneous literature under consideration must be at best only an approximation, and so when it is not possible to prove that the speaker has some special cause for showing deference to another it is safest to ascribe the use of the plur. among persons of the same general class of society to the confusion of the times or to an indifference on the part of author or scribe growing out of this confused or careless use of the plur. of respect.

III. SUPERIORS TO INFERIORS.

21. *Monarchs to Subjects.*

While a not inconsiderable number of the examples of the use of the plur. already examined have seemed to be due to confusion or carelessness on the part of the speakers—or of the writers—as a whole the plurals so used have been assumed to show a desire on the speaker's part to express respect or even a certain amount of humility toward a superior. At any rate the use of the plur. in the function of sing. is not yet common between those who feel themselves to be equals. And so it would appear to be safe to assume beforehand that in the speech of superiors to inferiors the plur. is not likely to play a very important part. Let us consider the pronoun as it is used by monarchs to their subjects of all ranks and if in the course of our study more plurals are found than anticipated then it will be time to inquire whether they have been used with a regard for the relative social standing of the persons addressed, that is to say, whether a monarch feels it incumbent upon him to speak with greater formality, as regards the pronoun, to a member of the knightly class than he would to a common man.

In the Auchinleck MS. among the very numerous examples of address by a monarch to a subject there is but one instance of the use of the plur., viz. in the speech in which the emperor, welcoming Guy, accepts his services (*Guy* 2882 ff.). Otherwise the sing. is used by emperors, kings, soudans, etc., to dukes, earls, knights, common men, etc. It is used, for example, in *Guy* by an emperor to a duke (1973, 2028 ff., 2757 ff.), by a Saracen king to a captive Christian earl (68:10, etc.), in *Rembrun* by the king to his knight in council (19:1 ff.), in *Bevis* by a conquered Saracen king to Bevis (1042 ff.), in *Arthour* by Uther to a knight (2693 ff.), in *Otuel* by Charles to the hero (206, etc.), in *S. S.* by a king to his steward (1582, etc.), in *Bevis* by the king to his marshal (3506), in *Arthour* by the king to his chamberlain (2460 ff.), etc.

In *Kyng Alisaunder* there is one instance of a plur. addressed to a messenger by a king, altho it might be assumed to include others:

5526 ff. Ich wil thee yiue of golde a mark,
And a stede strong and stark,
By so thou wil, without answee,
To youre kyng a lettre bere.

A noble with whom Alexander has exchanged places addresses his pseudo-councilor with the sing. altho Alexander uses the plur. to him

(7519, 7527 ff.). The queen of Egypt in speaking to the pretended astrologer uses the sing. with one exception (253 ff., 424). In the remaining cases of address by royalty to subjects or other inferiors the sing. is used, as, for example, in the address of an amiral to a noble in council (3087 ff.), of Alexander to a knight in battle (3916 ff.), of Darius to Alexander disguised as a messenger (4160 ff.), etc.

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* only the sing. is found. It is used by a king to an earl (55:14 ff.), by the king of France to his dukes (87:5 ff.), by the Greek emperor to his steward (166:11), by King Richard blaming a knight (173:15 ff.), etc.

In the *Story of England* there is one lone example of the plur. in the address of the king of Brittany to an archbishop sent from England (6945 ff., 6955 ff., 6970 ff.). In all other speeches of royalty to inferiors of all degrees the sing. is used: to the lord of Kent (5143 ff.), to a baron, by Uther (9365 ff.), by Arthur to one of his generals (13332 ff.), by Uther to Merlin (9392 ff.), by Ethelbert to St. Augustine (15053 ff.), etc.

In two instances in *Palerne* the plur. is used by royalty to persons who are technically inferiors. In the one case the Spanish king addresses the plur. to William, his captor (4092 ff., 4157 ff.). In the other the queen of Palerne addresses Prince Alphonse (8070.). In both cases the use of the plur. can be ascribed to a desire to show respect. The sing. is used by the emperor in anger to his daughter's companion (2036) and by a queen to her maid (3182 ff.). It is also used by the emperor to the peasant boy, William, as already noted in Section 18, and to the cowherd (248 ff., 275 ff., 322 ff.).

In the pieces of the Caius Coll. MS. among the numerous examples of speech by kings to inferiors a few rather perplexing cases occur. In *Richard* the king addresses his steward with both sing. and plur. (1487 ff., 1492 ff.). He does likewise in addressing his marshal (3388 ff., 3402 ff.). To "a noble clerk" he addresses the plur. (1173 ff.), and to a sailor who is probably a commander (2509 ff.). For the rest the sing. is used, by Richard in scorn of a French knight (210 ff.), by the king of Germany to a knight (835 ff., 991 ff.), by Richard in scorn to a Saracen messenger (3228), to other messengers (5469 ff., 6333, 6858), to a Saracen prince in battle (7053 ff.), to a porter of his prison (1041 ff.), to a mayor in a foreign country (1506 ff.), etc.

In *Ferumbras* the pronouns used by Charles to the peers are exclusively sing. (164 ff., 292 ff., 1024 ff., 1458 ff., 1466 ff., 1481 ff., etc.). Likewise Saracen king and amiral *thou* the Christian peers (915 ff., 1578 ff., 1843 ff., 1872 ff., etc.). To all other inferiors, also, the sing. is

used, as, for example, by the amiral to a professional thief (2387 ff.), to an engineer (3247 ff.) and to a messenger (3825 ff.), by the amiral insultingly to a bishop (5799), etc.

In *Gawayn* King Arthur uses only the sing. to the Green Knight (254 ff., 277 ff., 323 ff.), and to Gawayn, his nephew (372 ff., 477). In *Clannesse*, also, the sing. is used by the Biblical king, Belshazzar, to his marshal (1433 ff.), and to Daniel (1623 ff.).

In the Vernon collection the sing. is used in the rare cases where a king is pictured as addressing an inferior, notably, in *Robert*, where the new king addresses the deposed one (77 ff., 142, etc.) and the deposed one, a porter (98 ff.), and in *Joseph* where Joseph is addressed by a king (71 et passim) and by a queen (617 ff.). In *Leg. Aurea* 2 Ambrosius is *thoued* by the emperor (1008 ff.). The only exception is found in the same legend, where to a bishop who flatteringly uses the plur. the emperor replies with the same form (1075 ff.).

About half of the rather exceptional plurals used by royalty to those who are socially inferior go to show that even kings found it desirable, or necessary, at times, to be especially polite to persons below the grade of royalty. The rest of these plurals offer little explanation of their being.

22. Nobles, Knights, Ecclesiastics, to Inferiors.

In the Auchinleck MS. the fairly numerous pronouns addressed to knights by nobles are all sing. The sing. is used in *S. S.* by an earl to a stranger knight (2987 ff.), in *Guy* by a duke (910 ff., 933 ff.), in *Rembrun* by a duke (25:1 ff.), etc. The pilgrim who uses a plur. to a knight in *Guy* (1817 ff.) can hardly be considered as a superior. In address to superior household officers, however, a few plurals do occur where the speakers seem to be of higher rank, tho it is not always easy to decide just what the social standing of such officers was. In *Lai* a duke ordinarily uses the sing. to his butler (275 ff., 1386 ff.); but once when he addresses his butler in a fit of rage he lets a plur. slip in (841 ff.). A princess, in *Bevis*, addresses the sing. to the court chamberlain (1144, etc.), and the knight, her lover, does likewise at first (1154 ff.). Later however, he shifts to the plur. when the chamberlain addresses him with the plur. (2293 ff.). In *Arthour* ladies addressing a steward allow one plur. to slip in among the singulars (6237 ff.). The sing. is used by a duke, in *Lai*, to his steward (232 ff.), in *Guy* by a knight to a friendly sergeant (1619 ff.), in *Bevis* by a lady to a messenger (73 ff.), etc. To squires and pages only the sing. is used, namely, by a duke in *Amis* (2008 ff.), in *Guy* by the daughter of an earl (229 et passim), in *Otuel* to

the Christian squire by the Saracen Otuel (85 ff.), etc. In the examples of address to persons of what may be conveniently termed the professional class no examples of the plur. occur, altho the sing. is fairly well illustrated. And, finally, the sing. is used altogether in addressing persons of the middle and lower classes in general. It is used, for example, in *Mergrete* to the torturer by his lord (337 ff.), in *Amis* by a duke to a leper (2077 ff.), in *Guy* by a knight to the host of an inn (1932 ff.), in *Rembrun* by a knight to the porter of a castle (68:8 ff.), etc.

In the other MSS. which we are analyzing no examples of the plur. occur, and comparatively few of the sing., which could be placed under the present rubric. The sing. is used, to cite a very few examples as samples, in the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* by an earl to his servant (55:11 ff.), in the *Story of England* by a knight to an old woman (12251 ff.), by the English chancellor to a German messenger sent by Richard in *Richard (Caius)* (1209 ff.), in *Athelston* to messengers by an archbishop (396 ff., 707 ff.) and by an earl (726 ff.), in *H. Synne* by a bishop to a witch (519 ff.), by an abbot reproving an old man (8531 ff.), by an earl to a prisoner supposed to be of low rank (10613 ff.), in *Ferumbras* by Oliver to his squire (217 ff.), by a peer threatening a Saracen burglar (2444), in *Gawayn* by the hero to the castle porter (811) and to his guide (2126 ff.), etc.

In the Vernon MS. there are numerous examples of the use of the sing. by persons more or less superior to their hearers. In no case does such a superior use the plur. As examples of the address by nobles or knights may be cited the use of the sing. by an earl, in *Poems 31*, to a prisoner of unknown rank (719 ff.), in *Barlaam* by a knight to a poor man (134 ff.), in *Homilies 10* by a rich knight to a beggar (43 ff.), etc. Among ecclesiastics, the monk in *Euphros.* and the abbot *thou* a man, their friend (178 ff., 422 ff.), in *Homilies 31* a monk uses the sing. to a young man (6), in *Spir. Guy.* there are inquiries by the prior of the widow of the ghost (p. 321 ff.), etc. Here we might also include the use of the sing. by a merchant to his slave, in *Poems 31* (783), in *Leg. Aurea 5* by St. Bernard to a churl (836), in *Homilies 35* by a physician to a gardener (42), etc.

Aside from the very few exceptions to an otherwise universal practice there is nothing in the use of the pronoun by nobles, knights, ecclesiastics and other persons of superior social standing to their inferiors which could not be anticipated from the findings of foregoing sections. As the plur. was slowly becoming a mark of respect from an inferior to a superior, so in the speech of one who felt his superiority only the sing. would have a place.

23. *Adults to Children.*

From the Auchinleck MS. it appears that parents would use the sing. in speaking to their children irrespective of the social rank of the parents or the age of the children. In royal families it is used in *Tars* (*Auch.*) by the king to his daughter (52 et passim), in *Bevis* by the Saracen king to the princess (672, etc.); in noble families it is used in *Amis* by a duchess to her daughter (523 ff.), by an earl, in *Guy*, to his son (5611), etc.; in families of knightly rank it is used by a knight to his son in *Arthour* (2913 ff.), by ladies to their respective sons (4580 ff., 4614 ff., 7665 ff.), etc.; and, finally, in lower class families it is addressed, in *S. S.*, by a wise man to his son (1235, etc.), and by a woman to her married daughter (1754 ff.), etc.

The only example of the plur. from a parent to a child is in *Arthour*, where a mother has to admit to her son, a justice, that he is illegitimate:

1141 ff. þei ʒe me hong bi a cord,
He ne leiʒeþ neuer a word!

Adults not so related always use the sing. to children in the Auchinleck pieces, also. For example, it is used in *Amis* by a leprous knight to his boy attendant (1687, etc.), in *Bevis* by a tutor of knightly rank to his ward (358, etc.), in *Tristrem* by a mariner to the child hero (312), etc.

In the somewhat limited number of examples in this collection there is no instance of a plur. form addressed to a youth (squire or page) or to a maiden, whether the daughter of a noble or a maid-servant.

In *Homilies* the sing. is used by Herod to his stepdaughter (39:13 ff.), by Herodias to her daughter (39:25 ff.), by the Virgin to Jesus (108:20 ff.).

In *Kyng Alisaunder* the king, passing for an astrologer, addresses young Alexander, his son, with the sing. (723 ff.). The deposed queen *thous* her natural son (1055 ff.), and Queen Candace and her son angrily use the sing. to each other (7744 ff.).

In the *Chron. of R. of Brunne* it is not surprising to find that the mother uses both sing. and plur. to her son who is a king (269:26, 270:1). In the few other cases of address to children only the sing. is used (142:11, 294:23).

The sing. only is used to children in the *Story of England* (2288 ff., 2309 ff., 12239 ff., etc.). In *Palerne* the sing. is the normal form (341 ff., 410 ff., 445 ff., etc.); but the cowherd changes to the plur. in addressing his foster son, William, after the latter has been exalted to the throne (5267 ff.). The reason is equally clear when the wicked queen changes

to the plur. in addressing her stepson after she has allowed him to resume his human form (4459 ff.).

The sing. is used in *Ysumbras* (172 ff.), in *Richard (Caius)* by the king to his baron nephew (6611 ff.), in *Athelston* (657), in *Infancia* (460 ff., 613 ff., 203 ff., etc.).

In *H. Synne* fiends, coming to a maiden in the likeness of her parents, very curiously use the plur. to her (8199 ff.). In the other cases of speech by adults to children the sing. only is used (1148 ff., 1259 ff., 2864, etc.). Of course in the friar's directions for christening a child the formula to be addressed to the child contains the sing. (9602).

In *Ferumbras* the sing. is used consistently by parent to child (1986 ff., 5086 ff., etc.).

The shifting use of sing. and plur. in the conversation between father and daughter, in the *Perle*, has already been noticed to some extent in Section 7. Just as the daughter vacillates in the use of the pronoun in the course of the various speeches so the father uses first sing. (242 ff.), then plur. (287 ff.), then sing. and plur. intermingled (362 ff.), then plur. and sing. (469 ff.), etc. It is possible to assume that the father is at times including others than his daughter in his remarks tho it does not seem so likely in view of the fact that the daughter has already been convicted—or the author—of a seemingly purposeless mingling of the two forms.

In the Vernon MS. children are addressed with the sing. except in one case where the son is a pope (*Gregorius* 125 ff.). For examples of the sing. see: *Poems* 29 (4:90), *Cros* (249 ff.), *Alexius* (445 ff.), *Leg. Aurea* 6 (329 ff.), etc.

If the perplexing use of the plur. in the *Perle* be set aside it will be found true that the parent or elder always addresses a child or younger person with the sing. unless circumstances have exalted the child so much that the speaker is compelled to recognize himself an inferior, socially, as, for example, in the case of the cowherd and his foster son in *Palerne*.

24. Summary and Conclusions as to Address of Superiors to Inferiors.

The relatively few examples of the plur. addressed to one socially or technically inferior serve to strengthen the earlier conclusion that during the period included in the second and third quarters of the fourteenth century the use of the plur. pronoun to an individual was regarded as a mark of respect rather than as a sign of good breeding such as it became later. So the king occasionally finds it advisable to address with marked respect one who was formerly his inferior. Nobles and knights, of course, find it necessary at times to be politic in their speech to social in-

feriors. There is nothing to show, however, that they employed the plur. at this time as a mere matter of habit, unless the few unexplained cases noted be accepted as evidence of such a growing tendency. Parents and elders in general who habitually use the sing. to children occasionally find themselves placed by force of circumstances in a position of inferiority to their own children and use the plur. just as they would to anyone else of similar rank or renown.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS.

25. *To Giants, Dwarfs, etc.*

In the romances, in particular, giants play a rather important part among the characters. Consequently it seems worth while to stop for a moment to investigate the form of address which might be used by people who happened to come in contact with them.

In the Auchinleck MS. giants are usually addressed with the sing. In *Guy* in a combat with Amorant the hero uses the sing. (112:10, etc.) altho one plur. slips into the conversation with no apparent reason (110:4 ff.). *Guy* also uses the sing. to Colbrond (267:9 ff.). In *Bevis* giants are *thoued* by the hero (1872 ff., 2721 ff., 3601 ff., 3653 ff., etc.). In *Rouland* the hero uses the sing. to a Saracen giant (651 ff.). In *Tristrem* giants are *thoued* by the hero in combat (2331 ff., 2762 ff.), but a dwarf is honored with a plur. along with a sing. by *Tristrem* (2081 ff.). Perhaps the rime is responsible for the plur. rather than any merit of the dwarf.

In one or two other cases already noticed giants are addressed with the sing. Probably in their rôles as romantic characters they are to be looked upon as knights who meet other knights in combat, man to man, and therefore worthy of knightly consideration, or else as Saracens who cannot expect much consideration from good Christians of any class.

26. *To Various Supernatural Beings.*

In the religious pieces, especially, angels play an important part, as do also various sorts of evil spirits. In the Auchinleck collection the sing. is used in *De Creat.* by a messenger warning Lucifer of the danger of disobedience (9 ff.), by Adam and Eve to the fiend (288 ff., 420 ff.), in *Miracle* by a clerk to an angel (35), in *Harrowing* by the Lord to Satan (71 ff.), and in *Guy* by a hermit to an angel (285:3). In the *Ayenbite* the master of the fiends frequently *thous* his fiends in council (239:14 ff.). In *H. Synne* the sing. is used by a man to an apparition of a woman (709 ff.), by a monk to the apparition of a foul person (2595 ff.), by a priest to a ghost (10357 ff.). Angels, good and bad, are *thoued* by various speakers (225, 2453 ff., 4664 ff., 7764, 7775 ff., 7797 ff., etc.). Only a necromancer, addressing his infernal master, very properly uses the plur. (8234 ff.). And, finally, from the Vernon MS., a fairly extensive list of examples might be given tho little would be gained by it. The sing. is addressed by St. Paul to an angel in *Poems* 33 (250), in

Creat. by Seth to Michael (p. 226), etc. Address to fiends is rather more common, however, tho no more respect is shown them in most cases than to good angels. The sing. is used by Ambrose to a fiend in *Leg. Aurea* 2 (333 ff.), in *Homilies* 37 by a reformed woman to the devil (345 ff.), in *Creat.* by Adam and Eve to Satan (p. 223), etc. One plur. occurs in the speech of a Jew to his infernal majesty, in *Theoph.*:

218 ff. . . . and comeþ to asken ʒow merci.
I prey ʒow, lord, of ʒor gras,
þat ʒe help him in þis cas!

It would appear from the material at hand that angels were felt to be in a class with God and Jesus as sacred abstractions whereas the devils, etc., are more like the other dramatic characters of the literature under consideration. The devil is a feudal lord among his followers rather more often, it would seem, than God is among the angels. Hence the appearance of the plur. of respect in two speeches addressed to him.

27. *To Abstractions, Animals, Etc.*

In address to abstractions, animals, inanimate objects, etc., only the sing. occurs. It is used in *Guy* by the hero, as a page, to love (425 ff.), and by a knight to his broken sword (5225 ff.), in *Bevis* by a knight to his horse (3532 ff.), in *Ayenbite* by prudence to the love of eternal life (266:3, etc.) and by temperance to dread (269:28), in *Kyng Alisaunder* by the king to the magic trees of the moon and the sun (6896 ff., 6963 ff.), in *Richard (Caius)* by the hero to the gift-horse of the soudan (5547 ff.), in *Infancia* by Jesus commanding a tree to prostrate itself for his mother (82, 104), in *H. Synne* by a hermit to a friendly bear (4054 ff.) and by Robert, himself, to shrift (12075 ff.), in *Ferumbras* by Richard to his favorite horse (3713 ff.) and by Floripas in apostrophe to love (2795), and, finally, in the pieces of the Vernon MS. by the Virgin to the cross (*Poems* 52:2 et passim), by a bereaved man to earth (*Euphros.* 393 ff.), by a king and a Christian prophet to an idol (*Joseph* 391 ff.), etc. Numerous other minor examples might be given of speech to the soul, to birds and animals, to the dead, to ghosts, etc. But since the sing. is used uniformly nothing would be added to the results already gained.

V. GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

28. It will have occurred to the reader, no doubt, in the numerous instances when passages showing a confusion of the singular and the plural pronouns were under consideration, that perhaps too much stress was being laid upon texts which might not represent the work of the original author at all. It is very true that where a given text has passed thru the hands of numerous scribes much liberty may have been taken with the form of it, and many changes may have been made by the carelessness or deliberate action of the copyist. And yet this may be said regarding the pronominal forms, that if the scribe deliberately changed the form of the pronoun he would do so because he felt that as he found it, it did not represent faithfully the conversation which the characters would be likely to hold, and if he unconsciously or carelessly changed certain pronouns he would be likely to substitute forms in harmony with his own experience.

Just how far certain of the literary monuments which have been studied show the influence of the French versions of which they may have been translations or revisions it is also rather hard to determine. It can be said, however, that in no case does the English version use the plural as generally as the French does. We know that by the beginning of the fourteenth century the pronoun of respect was well established in French usage. And so when we find an author or translator deliberately changing to the sing. in the English it is safe to conclude that the sing. was still the regularly accepted form.

29. The results of this research have already been quite thoroly summed up in the summaries of the various chapters (Sections 11, 20 and 24). It remains, therefore, merely to summarize in general terms some of the conclusions gained from the foregoing careful consideration of the material.

During the period in which we are chiefly interested the plur. of the pronoun in so far as it can be deemed anything more than an erratic and purposeless deviation from the ordinary, older usage, is addressed to individuals chiefly as a mark of respect. Consequently it is employed most often by subjects to royalty, by children to parents and in general by inferiors who feel a need of showing special deference or respect. When it occurs in the speech of persons who may be considered as socially equal the reason is likely to be found in some special condition which exalts one above the other. Moreover, even in the speech of a superior to a

social inferior or a parent to a child, a sudden accession of power or influence may place the inferior so high that a plur. pronoun will seem to be quite fitting when addressed to him.

There is evidence of an increase in this practice of formal address, tho it is not easy to measure the growth because of the heterogeneous nature of the literature from which it has been necessary to draw conclusions. In *Sir Gawayn* and *William of Palerne* the plur. in the mouths of the characters seems due at times to mere force of habit. But if these two monuments be set aside we may say that the sing. is, even as late as the time of the Vernon MS., the accepted form and the use of the plur. should call for some special explanation. That the use of the plur. is increasing seems to be evidenced by the very confusion and shifting which we have been unable to explain in many cases except as the proof of a divided usage in fourteenth-century England.

30. This new phase of polite usage which is invading England is, as one would expect, confined largely to members of the upper classes of society. Kings, earls, knights, ecclesiastics, etc., use it with deliberate intent to gain favor or appease wrath. They also use it occasionally with no marked reason but rather as tho it were becoming second nature to do so. And they very often shift from sing. to plur. as tho they had not yet made up their minds as to the desirability of being thus formal. But on the whole it is from these classes that the great majority of our examples have come.

The lowest classes still cling to the old form of address even in their speech to kings and queens. They are, of course, slow to adopt a custom which represents a phase of courtly life entirely foreign to their usual course of life. So, while in the French the sing. may be accounted for at times as a direct insult, it is rarely, perhaps never, that in the English of our period. Rather it shows the speech of the plain man who speaks sincerely and directly.

31. Not only is it impossible to trace from the literature at hand the various steps in the introduction of the formal pronoun into England because of the uncertainty still remaining concerning the age of some of the MSS. and the date of composition of their contents, but it is equally hopeless to try to locate the section of the country in which the practice first took root. We might reasonably conjecture that it spread from the court to the East Midland country or that it came to southeastern England from the continent, but a glance at the MSS. which we have studied will show that north, south, east and west are all represented. It is extensively found where it might be least expected, in the conservative South and in the isolated Northwest.

APPENDIX. SUMMARIES OF THE VARIOUS MANUSCRIPTS.

While the primary purpose of this study is to trace as carefully as possible the growth of the practice of employing the plural *ye* in the function of the singular *thou* during the fourteenth century, yet it would be a pity to throw away altogether the by-products of such a study, which, as has been suggested in the Preface, were emphasized much more in the original form of this dissertation. And so it has seemed advisable to summarize as an appendix to the main study the more pronounced characteristics of the various manuscript collections along with a discussion of their relations to their sources. Perhaps such summaries, by shifting the point of view for the time being from the historical outlook to that of the individual manuscript, will throw more light on the relative frequency of the usage in various times and places, and suggest possible influences working to spread the practice in medieval England.

32. *The Auchinleck MS.*

The examples of the use of the pronoun have been treated thruout the foregoing discussions as tho they came directly from the mouths of living speakers. Such a method is convenient and the results may be thought to have justified its employment. And yet, as we have said at the very outset, as evidence, such examples can be given only the weight of an opinion, the opinion of a writer who, in many cases, let us hope, set down what he was accustomed to hear, but who, not infrequently, no doubt, could not have ventured to utilize the pronouns of his day and so must have been compelled to imitate the language of other literature of an earlier time. Whether the writer, however, put into the mouths of his characters pronouns selected by analogy with contemporary usage or by analogy with the usage set forth in earlier literature, such use of the pronoun is pretty sure to reflect those customs in which we are interested, and therefore would seem to warrant the drawing of conclusions.

But even this cannot be said of all manuscript collections. In the case of the Auchinleck MS. we not only do not know the identity of the author of a single piece but only in a few of the pieces can the individual characteristics of the authors be clearly traced. Furthermore, the pieces contained in the collection were composed at various times, some shortly before the collection was made, others well back in the previous century. If the conclusions drawn with regard to the use of the pronoun in this collection assume that usage of about 1325 A. D. is being shown, it must

be recognized that the usage which the authors themselves would know is not necessarily preserved, altho it is probably safe to assume, also, that this manuscript usage of about 1325 A.D. may have been somewhat archaic at the moment, both because of a tendency on the part of scribes to copy older forms even while trying to modernize literature, and because literary style undoubtedly accepted a usage somewhat behind that of spoken discourse. And, finally, the influence of the French, from which many of the pieces have been translated, must be taken into consideration in attempting to estimate the value of the collection as portraying the usage of its time.

After all, then, in considering the use of the pronouns in the Auchinleck MS. the chief concern must be as to whether the immediate scribe has showed care in the retention or insertion of pronominal forms. And it must be remembered, also, that it is not a question of just one scribe, but probably of five, in this manuscript.⁶⁶

There is to be found on the part of these scribes a degree of consistency which could scarcely have been expected. It is true that most of the examples of the use of the plural in the function of the singular show no pronounced reason for the use of the plural form, and in as many more instances the plural might have been similarly used instead of the singular which actually has been used. It is also true that in nearly half of the speeches where the plural form is so used there is an intermingling of singulars. Indeed this intermingling of the two forms is so common in the literature that one must conclude that it was so common in speech as to have occasioned no remark, much less to have been regarded as impolite or improper. On the whole, however, where the plural forms are used as singulars, either consistently or in part, in an overwhelming majority of cases a sufficient reason can be found for their use, usually a desire to show marked respect. In a few cases the employment of the plur. is undoubtedly due to the exigencies of rime. In a few cases the use of the plural must be passed by without a satisfactory explanation.

It is but just to conclude, however, that the scribes, in numerous examples of the use of the plural in the function of singular, seemed to have known well enough what they were doing.

33. *MS. of the Royal College of Physicians.*

From so small a MS. and, at that, one of homilies, not very much could be expected bearing upon the points under consideration. Two excellent cases of the plural used with the manifest intention of being re-

⁶⁶ According to Kölbing, Engl. Stud. VII, 190.

spectful are, then, a very good showing. The interesting thing is that already in the early part of the xivth century the new plural form could be heard by the people from the pulpit.⁶⁷

34. *The Ayenbite of Inwyt.*

The *Ayenbite*, as indeed one would suppose beforehand, does not furnish any evidence with regard to the use of the singular and plural pronouns as addressed to one person. There is no representation of real life in this work; if persons are introduced, they are either from the Bible or are mere types and generalizations. Even to-day, if we were giving speech to such lay figures, we would be likely to make them use to one another the older singular of the pronoun of address, which we still use in proverbs and fables at times. So in *Ayenbite*, whenever a pronoun is addressed to an individual it is in the singular.

35. *MS. Additional 17376.*

The examples from this MS. have been included merely for the sake of completeness since all are far removed from the experience of everyday life. Only the singular is used, in many instances where a modern writer would probably be inclined to keep the same form still.

36. *Lincoln's Inn MS. 150 (K yng Alisaunder).*

The examples of the plural from MS. Lincoln's Inn 150 occur only in a narrow range of circumstances. They are, however, proportionately numerous and most of them illuminating to a high degree. The implication of the plural pronouns quoted is indeed perfectly apparent,—a complimentary feeling or pretense of respect. It is regrettable that in this monument where there is evidence of so much intelligence in handling the pronouns the persons addressed are exclusively of the courtly class.

The English account of Alexander is professedly a translation from the French; Weber thinks that a Latin romance forms the basis for some portions. One cannot, then, say how far the employment of the plural was the work of a French writer, and how much the work of the

⁶⁷ If we could fully rely on the readings of the MS. this group of homilies would be very significant, not so much for the rapid spread of the plural pronoun in address to an individual as for the substitution of the oblique for the nominative case in the plural. But two circumstances make it seem very improbable that the scribe was quite so much ahead of his time as the printed text would indicate. There are no other grammatical peculiarities in the uses of the pronouns, and there is no instance of a nominative *you* addressed to more than one person, i. e., where it cannot be accounted for as an error for *þou*.

English translator, altho to judge by a very safe analogy from other monuments the credit would have to be given to the original. However, it is reasonably certain that in the case of the plurals which we have, the scribe deliberately retained forms which he found in his original or for what seemed to him good reasons inserted some of his own. Taking into consideration the freedom of alteration in translation which prevailed in the xivth century, we can be perfectly sure that these cases of the plural must have been familiar to him.

37. *The Chronicle of Robert of Brunne and Langtoft's Anglo-Norman Original.*

Peter Langtoft lived in the reign of Edward I, and into the reign of Edward II.⁶⁹ The MSS. date from the reign of Edward II or the first part of that of Edward III.⁷⁰ We can agree with Hearne that Langtoft was not a Frenchman by birth, even tho we have to disagree with respect to "his being so very well vers'd in the French Language."⁷¹ However, if French of Paris was to him 'unknowe,' we may enjoy a certain advantage derived from this fact, for we are quite sure that his use of the pronoun was not that of the continent, but that of England, albeit of those persons in England who spoke Anglo-Norman. Since Langtoft had little taste for direct quotation, in comparison with Robert of Brunne, the conclusion drawn from the comparison of the two works can be only of a general character, and cannot be extended to cover the several ranks of society. It is, however, clear that the singular prevails in Langtoft's Chronicle and is a correct form of address even to royalty. Altho there are a respectable number of cases of the plural, they seem rather accidental than designed. Such a conclusion would indeed serve as a support for the statement that Langtoft did not know the usage of France for the pronoun of the second person.⁷²

The translation of Robert of Brunne is almost entirely independent of its source in the matter of the use of the pronouns as in many obvious particulars. It would be of no profit to go over statistically the relations between the two. Suffice it to say that the plural is used with far greater frequency by Robert. Once in a while he may have turned into the

⁶⁹ Wright's Preface to *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, xiii.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xxi.

⁷¹ Hearne's Preface to *Peter Langtoft's Chronicle*, xxii.

⁷² Shall we consider the imperative in *-ez* discussed in previous notes as a sort of sucker out of the absorption in French of the sing. function by the plur. form, or are we to explain it as a grammatical peculiarity? On the latter possibility Schwan-Behrens' *Altfranzösische Grammatik* (1911) may throw a little light; cf. p. 337, 2d ed.

singular a good plural in his original, but his general tendency is unmistakable: to keep the original plurals, to change original singulars into plurals, and to use the plural freely in his independent speeches. The meaning of this is accentuated when we consider that in all probability Langtoft wrote for persons of some social station, and that Mannyng wrote for the common people.⁷³ If we figure from the dates of composition this change must have taken place between a time soon after 1307⁷⁴ and the year 1338,⁷⁵ about thirty years. Even allowing for changes by the MS. copyists of the English and for none by the copyists of the Anglo-Norman writer, the difference is sufficiently great.

As to the usage of the pronoun in the *Chronicle* little need be added in particular. One of the points to be noticed, however, is the great frequency of plural forms in address to royalty in contrast to the infrequency of them in address to the lords and knights. The other essential is the common use of the plural to the clergy, and particularly to the Pope, a point on which evidence is far to seek.

38. *The Lambeth Library MS.*

On account of the general nature of *The Story of England* and the considerable range of time which it covers the examples in it are altogether too scattering to serve as a basis for any definite conclusion. The only satisfactory attempt at a conclusion would be thru a brief enumeration of the various examples of the plural, but this would be merely repetition of facts set forth in preceding sections. There is, however, one characteristic of the very respectable showing of plural pronouns in this MS., namely, that they seem to have been largely overlooked or tolerated in the translation from originals. For scarcely any of them can one feel an intention and definite purpose on the part of the author. Nevertheless the toleration is practically confined to suitable circumstances, in which there may be respect; and the mere fact of toleration speaks largely for the prevalence of the form.

39. *The Relation of William of Palerne to its French Original.*

Since the relation between *William of Palerne* and *Guillaume de Palerne* is closer than in any other case where we have the French original of a monument which falls within the province of the present study,

⁷³ See Mannyng's prologue to his *Story of England*.

⁷⁴ Langtoft carries his narrative to the death of Edward I (July 1307) and four months thereafter.

⁷⁵ Mannyng states the date in an ecclesiastical circumlocution at the end of the *Chronicle*.

it will not be amiss to compare the two works' in detail rather than in general, as is the method elsewhere.⁷⁶ For address between parents and children the same rule holds in the French as we have observed in the English, there being but two points of difference worthy of note, namely, that the emperor uses the plural instead of the singular to his foster father, the cowherd, and that an emperor uses the plural to his daughter. The latter is probably significant even tho it is contrary to the form of address from a royal parent to a child in the other cases. In these two cases and in two others the English translator has shown his independence in substituting singulars for plurals. On the other hand in one instance he has retained what seems to be an unfortunate mixture of singulars and plurals in his original. Likewise in the form of address to royalty the same lack of system is observable in the French as in the English; or perhaps it would be more exact to say that the rule calls for the plural on all occasions, but that it is badly carried out. The difference is clearly brought out by the following examples in which the translator has changed the usage of his original; and these also show his ability to use his own judgment. There are five really important cases: the singular is changed to the plural in the speech of ambassadors on two occasions; and the plural is changed to the singular in the address from an emperor to his equal, in the address from a hostile knight to a king, and in address from a knight to a queen who is practically a captive.

For the address to nobles, etc., the comparison is hardly so satisfactory, altho one may say that the French again shows roughly the same usage as the English, in so far as one is able to determine the latter. However the French employs the plural between foes, which the English twice changes to singular. The English makes two other changes, one from a good plural to a weak singular, and one from a very bad singular to a good plural. It is, however, noticeable that often here (as well as elsewhere) a vacillation between singular and plural forms in English goes back to a similar vacillation in French. In the address to William the change by the translator from plural on the part of the maid Alexandrine to singular is very striking in its strict consistency. In the address from William's lemmann the English shows a persistent fluctuation between singular and plural, while the French appears to drop the singular very early in their acquaintance. In the division on the address to ladies are first to be found radical and wide-spreading differences between *William of Palerne* and its original. Instead of the singular we

⁷⁶ Furthermore in this work a mere summing up of the French usage from the footnotes already given would be likely to leave out important points, since a good deal of the poem has no equivalent in the English.

find only the plural in *Guillaume de Palerne* from William to his lemmman and to her cousin. The address of the companion to the emperor's daughter shifts from the customary plural to the familiar singular just as in the English, but the address to the companion from her mistress is very different. It, too, employs the plural and may shift to the singular only in a moment of confidence. In address to the lower classes the plural in the French seems to be supplanting the singular; in the English the difference is very marked. In address to God a plural in the French is very important and may be held responsible for a similar plural in another place in the translation.

Naturally, then, the question arises: Is the use of the pronoun by the translator independent and to be taken in good faith as reproducing what he had heard colloquially? Suspicion of the English version is aroused by its closeness in the use of the pronoun to *Guillaume de Palerne*, by its frequent mixture of forms corresponding to a mixture in that work, and by its obvious tendency to correct inconsistencies in that work. Yet we have also before us evidence of independence of standards in certain respects, which, apparently, show that we have to deal with no slavish adoption of French customs of speech. It would be absurd to suppose that the French had no influence on the forms used, but it is unnecessary to suppose that its influence carried the translator beyond the colloquial English custom. Relying on what we have previously observed in English monuments we should indeed suppose that its influence aided the translator in overcoming an innate reluctance to write what one has heard spoken unless one has also seen it written. One might note, in passing, the influence on the popular use of the plural pronoun which must have been exercised by the fair consistency⁷⁷ of such a monument as this, even tho it does not come in the first class with respect to popularity.

But the overwhelming evidence of the independence of the translator is to be found in his statements as to the purpose of his task:

167 ff. For he⁷⁸ of frensch is fayre tale . ferst dede translate,
In ese of englysch men . in englysch speche;

5532 ff. he let make þis mater . in þis maner speche,
for hem þat knowe no frensche . ne neuer vndersto(n).

Finally, a word must be said of the comparative backwardness of

⁷⁷ Skeat in his remarks on the use of *thou* and *ye* in his introduction (xli ff.) tabulates only "the best examples," and hence his list gives one the impression of somewhat greater consistency than actually exists.

⁷⁸ Referring to Humphrey de Bohun, who had the translation made.

English in using the new form of the pronoun. From the words of the author, William,⁷⁹ we know that the translation was made for Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford;⁸⁰ and that hence the date must have been between 1336 and 1361.⁸¹ As to the original, it was translated from the Latin for the Countess Yolande,⁸² probably between 1178 and 1200,⁸³ tho the only extant MS. dates from the second half of the xiiith century.⁸⁴ We have seen that in the English work the use of the plural is not so far advanced as it is in the French,⁸⁵ even tho it be quite as consistent. In other words, the use of the more formal pronoun, i. e., the plural in the function of singular, is not so well developed in the English version of the xivth century as the French is in the xith century original.

40. *The Caius College MS.*

In the use of the pronoun to individuals MS. Caius College 175 resembles MS. Lincoln's Inn 150. The examples from it are almost altogether confined to the speech of persons in the higher ranks of society. However, altho the instances of the plural are numerous, they are in the present MS. less striking and less conclusive, with perhaps one exception. There are, indeed, plenty of cases here to establish the fact that the plural pronoun was in common use in courtly classes and that it conveyed the idea of respect. On the other hand King Richard seems to use the plural freely to his inferiors; this would be very important were the instances of it thoroly to be relied on. In this MS. *Richard* is, like *Alisaunder*, confessedly a translation from the French, and hence, to judge by the analogy of monuments with which we can compare the French original, the ultimate responsibility for the cases of the plural must be given to France. However the fact that the English scribe has retained them is evidence that they were familiar to him.

41. *Infancia Saluatoris.*

In *Infancia* there are over a dozen examples of address to various persons, and nearly all of these give the impression of homely reality, far

⁷⁹ See line 5521 in the text, and a note by Skeat on page ix of the introduction.

⁸⁰ *Palerne* 161 ff. and 5521 ff.

⁸¹ Introd. to *Palerne*, xi.

⁸² *G. de P.* 9653 ff.

⁸³ Introd. to *Palerne*, xvi, and introd. to *G. de P.* x ff.

⁸⁴ Introd. to *Palerne*, xiv, and introd. to *G. de P.* xiii.

⁸⁵ *G. de P.*, unlike the other originals of which this work takes account, is written in the standard French of the northeast; cf. introd. xxii.

removed tho the setting is from actual life. Altho they do not throw any light on the use of the plural, they do at least testify to the prevalence of the singular in the humbler walks of English life. In the piece there are no examples of the use of the plural to an individual.

42. *MS. Regius 17 B xvii.*

The contents of this MS. are of a literary type which does not call for personal address, and so, when the pronoun of address does occur, it is in the nature of an accident. Only the singular is used in the few instances where the pronoun is called for.

43. *MS. Cambr. Dd V. 64.*

The pieces of MS. Cambr. Dd V. 64 are of such a nature that address to another person is almost out of the question. In the few cases that occur the singular only is found. The examples fall into three classes, namely, address to a few human beings, to God, and by the author to the reader.

44. *MS. Harl. 1701.*

In the two pieces in this MS. which are credited to Robert Manning of Brunne there is a fairly rich harvest of forms which help in the consideration of the question of formal address. It is true that the characters are of the lower classes more frequently than in such a piece as *Palerne* and so less apt to display this new fashion in speech which the courtly classes are cultivating. But the very lack of an atmosphere of culture and courtliness makes the few examples of the use of the plural all the more valuable.

Just how far the *Handlyng Synne* has been influenced in this matter by the *Manuel des Pechiez* is hard to say. The *Manuel* has the plural in many passages where the English version adopts the singular. Moreover it is impossible oftentimes to find a corresponding passage in the *Manuel*. This much can be said, however, regarding formal address in the two versions, that whereas in the French *Manuel* the plural seems to be used often without any special intention of showing respect, in *H. Synne* it is an innovation still more or less significant.

45. *The Use of the Pronoun in the English Ferumbras Compared to the Use of It in the French Fierabras.*

It is first requisite to discover the underlying principle in the use of the pronoun of the second person as it is shown in *Fierabras* which is

found in a Picard MS. of the first half of the xivth century.⁸⁶ Of course not all the instances of the use of the pronoun in direct address are given in the notes to the preceding pages, but a fairly representative portion are. From these it is conspicuously shown that the standard form of the pronoun to be used in all ordinary circumstances was the plural. It is the correct form not only from inferiors to their superiors, and between equals, but also from superiors to their inferiors. In the use of it there is no evidence of a desire to be polite, and it is even used in moments of anger. The use of the plural has furthermore been carried over into some cases where certainly it would not be expected, e. g., in speaking to a horse or praying to the Saracen god. The use of the plural pronoun, then, being normal, it is for the singular that reasons have to be found. In most cases it accompanies scornful speech; indeed so true is this that one quickly learns to rely on it for understanding the feeling of the speaker. However, in a few cases it indicates the inferiority of the person spoken to, and, in at least one case, familiarity on the part of the speakers, altho it does not seem to be used to children. It is also used in praying to God, and it may be used in apostrophizing an absent person. There are to be noted, moreover, a few cases of the singular which are quite inexplicable, and indeed quite incorrect, unless some further significance in the passages has been lost. When the singular and the plural pronouns occur in the same speech or connected speeches, they are ordinarily very clearly intended to show a change of sentiment on the part of the speaker. Indeed nice effects are thus obtained of which modern French is quite incapable. It must be admitted on the other hand that there are some instances in which singular forms seem to intrude into the use of plurals purely from oversight on the part of the author.

What, then, has the English translator done with the pronouns of his source, plurals, singulars, and the two combined? First, of the French plurals, those preserved in the English version can be counted on one hand. One might say that the great preponderance of plural forms has been swept away, except for a few trifling vestiges. Yet these are not chance vestiges, for one could scarcely look for them in more significant places: the peers protesting to Charles for one of their number, the peers demanding of Charles the protection of more men, and a captured peer protesting to the amiral that he is but a poor knight. Nevertheless it would be unsafe to say that equally significant places for consistent plurals might not be found. The number of cases of plurals in the French text changed for the most part into singulars but yet retaining in

⁸⁶ Introduction to *Fierabras*, p. xx.

English lingering plural forms, is three or four times as large as the number of those completely changed. The persistent plural pronouns may usually be considered as indicating respect, provided that we give them the benefit of the doubt. It would, however, not be easy to make out a case for them in contrast with other examples in which only the singular occurs. Furthermore in the speeches in which plurals and singulars occur together, their connection does not usually make good sense—there is no implied change of mood on the part of the speaker. Really, then, the best that one can say for these plural pronouns clinging to their existence in the midst of singulars is that they were overlooked by the translator in speeches in which they were not in themselves inappropriate. Or not impossibly the translator may have changed his mind as to which form he would use. Taking up lastly the cases of plurals changed thruout into singulars we can get an idea how relentlessly the translator worked. A mere glance at the previous pages and the notes shows that such cases make up the bulk of the examples. In certain sections, such as the address of Christians to the peers, they make up practically all the examples.

Of the examples in *Fierabras* of a combination of singular with plural forms there is no case in *Ferumbras* in which they are brought to a uniform plural. Scarcely more passages containing both singular and plural are retained in the same form than passages of consistent plural. Of these mixtures of singular and plural which have been preserved little can be said in explanation. By reducing, however, (as is done in most cases) a change between singular and plural to uniform singulars, some of the most spirited changes in mood which the original shows have been lost.

Finally, we have to consider the treatment of the singular as it occurs in the original. There are no cases of the changing of a group of singular forms into consistent plurals, but there are three cases of changing such a group into one of singular and plural forms. Their importance hardly needs to be emphasized. The language of Floripas to Charles is furnished with enough plural pronouns to keep it from the rudeness that it seems to have in *Fierabras*. The report of a king to the amiral is given at least one plural pronoun,—altho indeed that pronoun has no equivalent in the French either singular or plural. Finally, in the very respectful last speech from the wounded Ferumbras to his conqueror, Oliver, there are two plural pronouns. This was not quite an innovation, for plurals had occurred in the original shortly before. These changes do not seem to have been by chance. It is hardly necessary to

add that in all but three cases singulars in the original have been preserved in the translation.

The basic principle of the English translator of *Fierabras* must be clear by this time, and indeed it has been tacitly assumed in the preceding paragraphs. Yet it ought to be definitely stated in contrast to the principle observed in the original. In our Middle English version the singular is the normal and regular form, to be used in a large majority of the cases. So far from there being any scorn implied in the use of it, it is certain that it is perfectly respectful, not only between equals, but also to superiors. It is the plural pronoun that has to be accounted for in the translation. Examples of it examined as to internal structure or in comparison with examples of the singular addressed to the same person may be perplexing, but yet in all but a negligibly small number of cases we can see that it implied respect. When a group such as that of address to Charles is compared with one like that of address to the peers the significance of the plural comes out startlingly.

We are indeed fortunate in having the version from which the English *Ferumbras* was translated, altho perhaps not the actual MS. used. The task of translating the two forms of the pronoun from the French, in which the use of them was still uncertain, into the English, in which their use was rapidly shifting, was not a slight one. The work seems to have been done conscientiously. A sidelight on the character of our scribe is given by the existence of a first draft, which in two instances shows a change of mind on the very subject of this chapter.

46. MS. Cotton Nero A x.

Difficult as it is to compare four works so unlike as those of MS. Nero A x with respect to their use of the pronoun, it is nevertheless necessary at least to attempt it. First, *Perle*, altho the range of quotations is narrow, shows a distinct tendency toward the use of the plural. Indeed, so remarkable are the cases of the plural between father and daughter that we may feel a reasonable confidence that in circumstances similar to those of *Gawayn* the actual number of plural pronouns would have been equally large. Doubtless one may think of the usage of the daughter as the common usage in the world, and of the fact that the father uses the plural form as a matter of humility before one who in the City of the Lamb is a queen. The use of the plural may certainly be said to make for vividness of the account, since in mere visions and also in allegories the singular is more natural even to-day. In *Clannesse* the number of plural forms is proportionately less, and the reason for it seems to be that it utilizes Biblical material, in which the plural is scarcely

proper,—to judge again by the feeling of the present time. That plural forms do occur is indeed remarkable. In *Pacience*, however, the singular occurs without exception, and seems to show a uniformity which the former work only approximated. In *Gawayn* the predominating use of the plural is the carrying out of a principle apparent in *Perle* and one strong enough to make itself felt even in *Clannesse*.

The use of the plural pronoun in *Gawayn* is one of the most remarkable things in the history of the pronoun of address for the xivth century. Altho the examples of the use of the singular are not wanting, and indeed make a very respectable showing, the plural prevails, and the examples of it become so numerous and so extensive that one could not think of quoting them all. In significance the use of the plural seems to be rather different from that in the other English monuments of the period, and also from the French usage. The plurals do not show any especial respect; neither are they forms always to be used unless one intends insult. Rather they are a part of the courtly speech and the courtly manners of the poem. Thus no particular case of the plural needs to be explained, as ordinarily it does in the monuments under consideration; on the other hand the use of the singular likewise scarcely needs to be explained, and altho it is significant in some cases, in others it is not. The use of the pronouns will be found to be in harmony with the unique character of the work. It would be a little unsafe to suppose that the use of the plural was so common in actual life, even of a castle, as it is in this poem, just as it would be unsafe to take this romance as a realistic picture of manners. In these particulars as well as in the extraordinary description of color there is evidence of conscious art and idealization.

Finally, the provenience of MS. Cotton Nero A x must not be overlooked and the nature of its language. It comes from the northern part of the west of England, far from the influence of France. But it would be absurd to suppose that the author was unacquainted with French, even tho the assumption by Gaston Paris of a French original be repudiated. And yet there is still the strange contrast between the modernity of the use of the plural and the antiquity of the language, which indeed strongly recalls Spenser in the fondness for archaic and obsolete words. It is a contrast which by no means detracts from the interest of MS. Cotton Nero A x.

47. *The Vernon MS.*

Altho the Vernon MS. does not furnish us with any fresh information regarding forms of pronominal address in worldly intercourse, it has enough cases of the plural to establish rather than to discount the con-

clusions at which we have already arrived,—and that in a religious atmosphere, which is usually conservative. We can hardly compare the general usage with that of the smaller and more valuable MSS. with which we started, altho we would venture the opinion that the use of the plural is further developed, even for family and social relationships. Such an opinion would receive some tangible support from the comparison of the two texts of the *King of Tars* and from the state of development of the plural pronoun in the religious field. It is indeed for the latter that MS. Vernon is most valuable, supplying as it does facts that without it would be quite lacking or but half established. More is not necessary than to mention again the capital examples of the respectful plural to ecclesiastics of varying stations, and—what seems to us much more of a curiosity—the use of the plural to God and to the Virgin Mary.

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